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Drinking Asbestos in Virginia
What We Think of Our Children

★ THE NORTH AMERICAN ★

ISSN 0029-2397

REVIEW

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Jacob Landau
Inferno

Kenneth Lash & David Whitsett
Work and Leisure

Gudiño Kieffer
Buenos Aires as a Violent City

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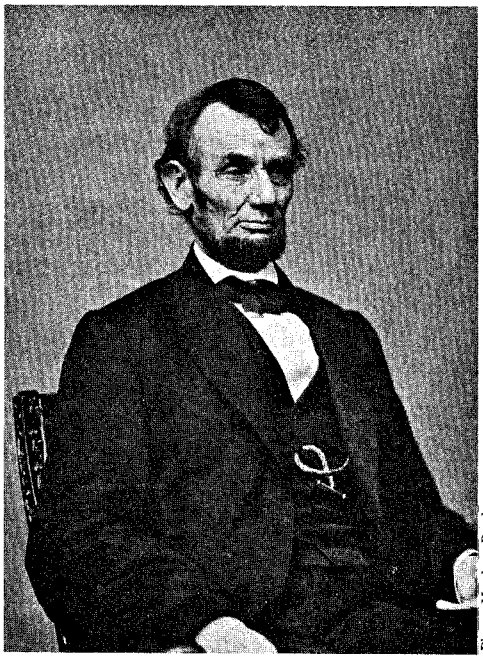

Photo: Matthew Brady

What sort of man reads the North American Review?

EDITORIAL NOTE.

The publishers of the North American Review have had the honor of receiving the following letter from the President of the United States.

"Executive Mansion,
Washington, January 16, 1864.

"Messrs. Crosby and Nichols:–

"Gentlemen: The number for this month and year of the North American Review was duly received, and for which please accept my thanks. Of course I am not the most impartial judge; yet, with due allowance for this, I venture to hope that the article entitled 'The President's Policy' will be of value to the country. I fear I am not quite worthy of all which is therein kindly said of me personally.

"The sentence of twelve lines, commencing at the top of page 252, I could wish to be not exactly as it is. In what is there expressed, the writer has not correctly understood me. I have never had a theory that Secession could absolve States or people from their obligations. Precisely the contrary is asserted in the Inaugural Address; and it was because of my belief in the continuation of these obligations, that I was puzzled, for a time, as to denying the legal rights of those citizens who remained individually innocent of treason or rebellion. But I mean no more now than to merely call attention to this point.

"Yours respectfully,

"A. Lincoln."

[Nothing could have been further from the intention of the Editors than to misrepresent the opinions of the President. They merely meant that, in their judgment, the policy of the Administration was at first such as practically to concede to any rebel who might choose to profess loyalty, rights under the Constitution whose corresponding obligations he repudiated.]

From *The North American Review*, April 1864

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★ THE NORTH AMERICAN ★

REVIEW

Founded in 1815 Volume 263, Number 3 Fall 1978

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ASBESTOS

One Man vs. City Hall

In 1969 the City Council in Chesapeake, Virginia, passed a law requiring all residents to connect their homes to municipal water lines. This was not an unusual measure since a number of cities in the nation have mandatory connection ordinances.

Only rarely, however, are such ordinances enforced; most people prefer city water to well water (or did, before the Environmental Protection Agency revealed the poor quality of drinking water in many municipal systems) and are anxious to comply with the law.

Highly extraordinary was one provision of the Chesapeake ordinance. It outlawed wells if city water lines were available, the only such prohibition in the nation. There are many wells in Chesapeake, which is mostly rural, but its water system is being enlarged rapidly, especially in the more populated areas.

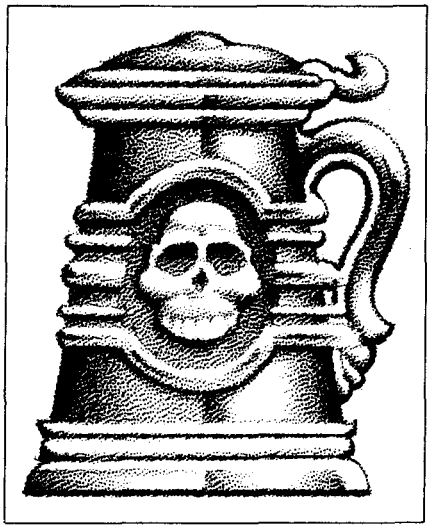
Not long after the ordinance was passed I read Paul Brodeur's "The Expendable Americans" with its descriptions of the ubiquitousness and insidiousness of asbestos, a mineral put into thousands of products from insulation to talcum powder, and a known carcinogen.

According to Brodeur, more than one million asbestos fibers can be laid side by side in a linear inch. They are so small they can be seen best with an electron microscope; they are so tiny they pass readily through the placental wall.

Inhaled, the fibers cause cancer. Doctors have long known that asbestos workers have a higher incidence of cancer, not only of the lungs but of the stomach and colon, presumably because they swallow the fibers in their sputum.

* * *

Not long after I read Brodeur's book the Chesapeake Department of Public Utilities installed asbestos-



cement water lines in the street in front of my home and I was notified to hook up to them or be taken to court.

Concerned about the safety of the pipes (The Center for Science in the Public Interest has asked the EPA to ban them), I filed a lawsuit in Chesapeake Circuit Court, acting as my own attorney, seeking an injunction preventing the city from forcing me to use city water. My grounds: asbestos-cement pipes are a health hazard.

My complaint was heard in February 1975 and I took to court some of my file of legal, technical and medical papers written by authorities on asbestos and cancer.

Among them were these statements:

"If there are alternatives, and there clearly are, then asbestos-cement pipe should be avoided." *Robert H. Harris, staff scientist, Environmental Defense Fund.*

"It is believed the placental membrane is a barrier for all particulate matter. Apparently these small asbestos fibers can get through." *Dr. Roderic D. Pontefract, Canadian Bureau of Microbial Hazards.*

"Asbestos fibers were found by light microscopy to be present in 30 of 32 asbestos-cement water systems tested in Vermont." *Harold M. Sargent, professional engineer, Underhill, Vermont.*

"Look back 30 years and consider how much healthier we would be today if the public health authorities had warned in the 1940s about tobacco and asbestos." *Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York City.*

Dr. Selikoff, probably the nation's foremost expert on cancer and asbestos, was asked by the late Senator Joseph Montoya of New Mexico if anyone other than the manufacturers can give assurance the pipes are safe.

"In my opinion, such assurance, if given, would be based on opinion, and not evidence," Dr. Selikoff replied.

But the presiding judge, Jerry Bray, refused to admit any of the above evidence. Indeed, he rejected all of my evidence, including a verbatim transcript of remarks made by U.S. District Judge Miles Lord in the now-famous Duluth vs. Reserve Mining Company case in which Judge Lord stated he found there was evidence of a health hazard from asbestos fibers in water. (During the trial, Judge Bray—perhaps inadvertently—referred twice to the defendant, the City of Chesapeake, as "we.")

Nor would Judge Bray consider a self-serving brochure published by the Asbestos/Cement Pipe Manufacturers Association in which the manufacturers admit water passing through the pipes erodes fibers from the walls and carries them into homes. (The association claims in the brochure that the number of fibers is small and that they are harmless.)

The judge dismissed my lawsuit for lack of evidence. A week later I was back in court, still acting as my own attorney, this time on grounds that the city ordinance outlawing wells violates both the Virginia and United States constitutions. My adversary in court was Ron Hallman,

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deputy city attorney, an engaging young man with whom I used to play tennis. (I introduced him in a spirit of levity as "the man who's trying to put me in jail for drinking well water.")

Hallman filed various dilatory pleas seeking to have my second lawsuit thrown out of court. One of these complained that I had not numbered the paragraphs in my lawsuit. Another, citing the doctrine of *res judicata*, was so involved it caused me to spend hours in the Norfolk and Portsmouth Bar Association law library.

In raising *res judicata*, Hallman contended the issues had been decided in my first case.

Each of his pleas was denied by another Chesapeake judge, William Hodges. *Res judicata*, however, did what Hallman feared. It sent me to an attorney, Paul Lipkin, a thorough and dedicated man.

* * *

Meantime, my file on asbestos pipes and cancer grew larger. The EPA started one study on the erosion of asbestos fibers from pipe walls and another on the relationship between the pipes and cancer. Both studies are to be completed this year.

(Preliminary testing by the EPA showed that there was an average of 475 fibers per liter of water flowing through a four-inch, 100-foot long pipe and 1,350 fibers per liter of water flowing through a six-inch pipe the same length. Samples of water taken after the pipes were disconnected and reassembled showed 19,000 fibers per liter. Chesapeake water lines are six inches in diameter.)

While my second action was pending the EPA published a list of 253 possibly harmful substances found in city water. Chlorine, when combined with natural or man-made compounds in water, creates other compounds which are linked with cancer. Chloroform is one of these.

(When my neighbor's young daughter celebrated her birthday, she received five goldfish as a gift. She put them in a bowl of city water and they turned bellyup and died. Her replacements were put in well water where they thrived.)

The months passed, then a year, and now more than three years with my fight over my well continuing in court. One day I ran into Hallman on the street and we stopped in a nearby restaurant for a cup of coffee. Hallman mentioned casually he was buying a farm in Fentress, a rural section not served by city water lines.

"You s.o.b.," I said, suddenly aware of the irony of the situation. "You're trying to put me in jail for drinking well water and you want to move out in the country where you can drink it."

"Don't tell anybody," Hallman said, "but city water tastes awful. Besides, my wife is on a health food kick and she won't eat or drink anything with additives in it."

Later, my attorney and Hallman agreed to stipulate the facts in the case and thus avoid a long trial. The city agreed that my well produces clear, pure, good-tasting water and I agreed that I'm violating the city ordinance.

Hallman claims that under its police powers the city has a right to close down my well. I contend I have a legal right to quench my thirst from water in my property. Appellate courts throughout the United States consistently have held that water underlying a man's land is his to do with whatever he pleases.

It pleases me to drink water from my well and avoid asbestos fibers. Well water is of better quality than surface water.

Well water is also relatively immune from contamination and it costs less. I get 1,000 gallons of water from my well for five cents worth of electricity. The same amount of water from the city would cost me $1.00.

* * *

Summer before last, a drought hit Virginia. Reservoirs dried up and restrictions were placed on the use of city water. My neighbors got only pencil-thin streams of city water from their faucets. I had water in abundance from my well.

Then, last November, when the drought was at its worst, Judge Hodges suddenly ruled against me. He had not called for oral arguments, as is customary. I have appealed his decision to the Virginia Supreme Court. If I lose before the Virginia high court I shall go to the United States Supreme Court. (See below.)

Last December, I decided to escalate still further my fight for my well. I stopped in to see Watson Allen, the Chesapeake Director of Public Utilities and the man who purchased the asbestos-cement water lines.

Allen is also a member of the Utility Review Board which decides who shall be exempt from the city's mandatory connection ordinance. (Under the City Code, a person who wishes to avoid connecting to city water lines has a valid excuse for not doing so if he claims he can't find a plumber.)

"I'd like to see the minutes of the meetings of the Utility Review Board," I told Allen.

"Sure," he said, "but I want to talk to the city attorney first."

"Why? They're public records."

"I know, but I want to talk to him first."

After talking with City Attorney Vernon Forehand he turned to me. "The city attorney says you'll have to make a formal application to see the minutes."

"I hereby make formal application to see the minutes," I said.

A wan smile crossed Allen's face. "I think he means in writing."

Later in the day I made written application to see the minutes, citing the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The following day I got a letter from City Attorney Forehand asking me to state "specifically in detail" what I wanted to see.

I stated in my reply I wanted to see all the minutes of all the meetings of the Utility Review Board.

On January 3 City Attorney Forehand wrote to say that in his opinion I was entitled to see the records. On January 9 the Department of Public Utilities informed me I could see the records at 9:30 a.m. January 12.

At that time and on that date I looked at the records and, lo, Vernon Forehand's name led all the rest.

". . . My neighbor's young daughter received five goldfish as a gift. . . . In a bowl of city water they turned bellyup and died."

The records showed that he appeared before the board on April 20, May 18, June 15 and July 20, 1971, asking that he be exempt from the city's mandatory connection ordinance. On June 10, 1975, while his request for exemption was still pending (the Utility Review Board took its time in deciding his case) Forehand was appointed city attorney and with his deputy, Hallman, quickly got to

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What kind of fool would get involved in something that: Is without profit? Has impossible hours? Is involved in one disaster after another? That even asks for blood?

We hope you're that kind of fool.

the good neighbor.

The American Red Cross

advertising contributed for the public good

work prosecuting those persons who haven't hooked up to city water lines.

On May 18, 1976, the Utility Review Board met and voted to take no action on Forehand's request "because Mr. Forehand has already connected."

The board has not held a meeting since. The Chesapeake City Council is now trying to find out why.

As of this writing I'm still using my well, but after more than three years of doing battle with City Hall I'm still puzzled by the apathy in my hometown. True, during that summer's drought many people disconnected from city water lines (in violation of the law) and went back to their wells. But they did it surreptitiously. Of Chesapeake's 100,000 residents I stand alone in publicly fighting to save my well and avoid asbestos fibers. Those who have inquired about my violating the law and the progress of my appeal, have commented: "Well, you gotta die from something."

To which I reply: "Yeh, but I want to die from something besides cancer."

The levity is gone now from the fight. I no longer have jocular exchanges with City Attorney Forehand and his deputy, Hallman. Watson Allen, the director of public utilities, turns away when I approach with a greeting.

The last time I saw Allen was at a City Council meeting in February when he introduced an ordinance requiring all wells at homes connected to city water to be labeled "in a conspicuous manner" with signs reading "Water Unsafe for Drinking."

Council passed it without comment. —*Carl Cahill*

* * *

[Since I wrote the essay above, these developments in the fight over asbestos-cement water pipes have ensued:

○ City Attorney Forehand took an early retirement July 1. (He was scheduled to retire December 31, 1978.) His deputy, Ron Hallman, was appointed to succeed him.

○ I sued Watson Allen, the Director of Public Utilities, also under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, to see public records on the amount of asbestos-cement water pipe the city has purchased. I represented myself in court. Hallman, in his first case since being appointed City Attorney, defended Allen. The judge ruled I was entitled to see the records and ordered Allen to pay my court costs of $16.50.

○ The city real estate assessor's office upped the valuation on my home 68%, the biggest percentage increase of any home in the city. The word "uncooperative" was also stamped on my assessment sheet. I appealed the increase to the Equalization Review Board and expect a decision this fall. The employee who marked "uncooperative" on my file says he doesn't know why he did it. The word has since been removed.

○ More than 100 residents of Taylorwood, a Chesapeake subdivision, joined me in protesting the city's use of asbestos-cement pipes to carry drinking water throughout the city. It was the first help I had received in my long fight.

○ City Council banned the pipes, then lifted the ban and appointed a three-man committee made up of a doctor, lawyer, and engineer to determine the safety of the pipes. It was the first time anywhere the pipes had been banned, even though temporarily.

○ The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals denied my appeal without comment. I have appealed to the United States Supreme Court.

And, coincidentally:

○ EPA researchers have found asbestos fibers in the urine of Duluth residents, proof that fibers in drinking water pass through the tissues of the body.

○ Mayo Clinic researchers have found that asbestos fibers injected in rats passed through the gut wall in less than an hour.

○ The Virginia Department of Public Health, which had never shown any interest in the pipes, urged in August that they be used "prudently."

○ The EPA's Office of Toxic Substances is, according to deputy assistant administrator Warren Muir, "now reviewing all aspects of the asbestos problem, with the possibility of regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act or other legislation such as the Safe Drinking Water Act. Asbestos-cement pipe . . . will definitely be considered in this review. We expect to complete our analysis in the next few months." —*C.C.*]

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LIFE IN AMERICA

Several Speculations

"Don't let your heart get higher than your anal canal," the doctor said. I agreed with him, and was pleased to have encountered a physician willing to talk philosophy. I was framing my reply when he walked away. As I lie here, obeying his Draconian edict, it comes to me more and more convincingly that he was in fact diagnosing my material case as an analogue, a minor but exact replica of the human condition. Under eternal skies, as one says. If this is so I am lying here day upon day for nothing. However, by the same reasoning, it would make no difference were I to get up. I believe I have the makings of an avant-garde French novel. Beyond Robbe-Grillet. Behind Beckett.

* * *

There has been news of real stature lately—artistic, political, civic. In turn, Alan Ayckbourn's trilogy, "The Norman Conquests," Proposition 13, and the high scoldings of Alexander Solzhenitsyn. They appear closely related, intricate variations on a similar theme. In the normal course of sound writing I should now announce that theme. I shall not. I don't know it yet.

In Ayckbourn's three-part drama Norman, the rascally charmer, improves his dull time at the family country house by seducing all three of the family girls turn by turn, including his own wife. He's not, you see, ungenerous; he's a librarian. Thorough. These books need taking down and dusting. A good worker, helpful, bored, acting out a dream of the disorderly in ordered fashion, asserting the rights of human charm in the stacked rigidities of this middleclass family. (If by family one refers to the contemporary form of it, a repository of older, long unfelt, bindings.) But it is not 1066 and Norman is not conquesting the barbarians—indeed, as it turns out, he *is* the barbarian. The new one. The new universal one.

The twentieth-century vandal and visaged-Goth, the barbaric ME. His homeland—which exists wherever he is—is the long-sought, sea-girt land of *S'Amuser*. Loose among the hardened, the automatic, the vestigial values of materialism, he launches the conquering smile, the singing word, the beckoning unbuckle. He is irresistible, he is heroic. And like most heroes his stock-in-trade is the destruction of something.

Solzhenitsyn, now, is a genuine hero. Absolutely unlike Norman. A sufferer, a life of self-abnegation, a spirit possibly as pure as spirits are forged among us. And so unutterably lonely. His Harvard Commencement address was a stirring admonition to join him. Not a plea. This man does not plead. He simply says that if we do not become more like him, or at least more like the spiritually refined and defined Russian, and soon, then destruction will find us. It is already loose in our streets, sniffing out our address. And its food, its energizing source, is empty materialism, middle class ethos, the vanity and vacuum of individualism, the grossness of self-engrossment. We are dying from lack of spiritual nutrition. Norman put it in a different way to Penelope. He didn't believe it, of course, she did. That's the whole point.

And now we come to Howard Jarvis, the bullfrog who finally found his chorus. Their rowdy anthem, Proposition 13, has a catchy tune and became an instant hit. Its words are revolutionary ("Down with Big Government/Taxes are not heavensent"), its intro stirringly conservative ("Up with Me/Down with Thee"). And who is Me? The Middle Class, and all who aspire to it. At once the American backbone and the American Dream. We should have evolved another by now. Twenty years of social legislation were at least trying to expand the dream; the colors of concern for psychological well-being were tinging the black-and-white of material concerns. Elements of evolution were signaled by the sudden introduction of daily concern for everybody's environment, health, recreation, equality of opportunity. But the conscience of the race turns out to be more the maligned Big Government than the heroized people. The people, it seems, would tolerate and even support such widening horizons only so long as it wasn't clear how much they cost. But taxes rose and rose until damn near anybody could see them. Their shadow began to fall into the backyard, darken the picture window. Cast by Government, grown the size of Gulliver. So the people are making their plans, their nets. Down with all parts of local tax that don't go to police and fire departments (e.g., schools, libraries, parks, arts centers, help for aged, handicapped, poor, WELFARE).

The *idea* of the welfare state, like the *idea* of most socialisms, is noble. The reality is ignoble. Because in the end it is always means that matter. Nobody knows how to *do* socialism. Only how to think it. The idea doesn't translate. It has to be awkwardly assembled, improvised, enlarged, made more and more artificial, i.e., legislated. Organic social-

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ism, a true welfare state, would be the one recommended by Christ. A recommendation taken seriously only in words.

What the world takes seriously is a multinational dream projected best in the image of the United States middle class. Everybody wants food, shelter, clothing; then dancing, then cars. Everybody. The maligned United States, with its maligned middle class (and an unparallelled arts and science establishment and activity) is the not-so-secret heart's desire of history. Not the only desire, but the first one, the rudimentary one. We are the real conquerors of the rudimentary. Now it is time for a next step, beyond money. We may not get to make it. Next steps are threatening. One can always lose the place one was in.

Solzhenitsyn and Ayckbourn urge us to abandon that place; Proposition 13 would have us defend it. Proposition 13 is garbled and conniving, but no less serious for all that. It expresses more than surface politics. More even than surface selfishness.

It is a sign signalling a crossroads.

* * *

Down one of those roads, a superhighway leading to a dead-end, lies Marin County, California. Capitol of a newly-evolved American species, either mutant or marvel—the glittering, golden *ME*.

This fabulous creature has found El Dorado, discovered the legendary mines, and lo! they are within the Self, even as the wise men said. But the wise men didn't say anything about how easy it was and quick and what a trip to go down into the mines and bring it all up. Now the word has spread, the rush is on. They call this piece of pioneering the Human Potential movement. It made national television last week. Commercial television.

"I Want It All Now" was the title of the show, a peek into Marin County hosted by Edwin Newman. For those few who know Marin it was old news in a stale format; for all the rest it must have felt like a guided tour to a psychological nude-bathing beach.

The show's catchy headline-title was followed by an equally enticing lead-in: Marin County is one of the five richest counties in the United States. Ah, good. We're going to get a peep at the plutocracy. This was quickly followed by a view of the great Golden Gate Bridge that leads from San Francisco to Marin. Enshrouded in fog. Of course. Mystery, danger, who-knows-what-beyond? Mr. Newman citing softly the second major function of the Golden Gate Bridge, as a platform for suicide. It holds the record. Why, asks Mr. Newman, why should this bridge situated amid such beauty (the blue San Francisco bay beneath) be a place of suicide? Clearly, amidst the fog, he is going to answer this intriguing question, set the theme for this program. The answer, says Mr. Newman, seems to be that when people move here from the rest of the country, westering to a golden land, they have come as far as they can. The land ends here. The hope ends here. And if things do not work out for them, if the golden gate is a mirage, they can go no further. Many are too tired, too dispirited, to go back. "If I can't make it here, I can't make it anywhere." So they go off. Off the bridge.

Prime-time sociology. Almost philosophy, if you look at it right. The only trouble is that any wino on Market Street would give you the same analysis. It's the cliché explanation. I don't know how old it is. It was common currency when I was living there fifteen years ago. Which isn't to say it's false, but rather that it's easy, which was characteristic of the program.

A major portion of the show was given over to looks at the life and times of a mid-life lady, slender, white-haired, "independently wealthy." A recent pilgrim, with her children, from Florida. No husband. (A husband, from Chicago, was represented in another part of the program, doing with his ex-wife a duet in praise of divorce.) This lady said her life had been stale and unprofitable. All she did was what she had been brought up to do, like care for her kids. No life of her own. She had, she said, often considered suicide. Then she heard of the "open" lifestyle of Marin County and had sold off Florida, packed up, come here. The camera followed some of the doings in the day of her new life. Tai-chi (Chinese acrobatics) in the morning, encounter group in the afternoon, then in the evening off to a disco with a young date. Talking about how she no longer gives up her life to her children, how they must take on their own responsibility for growing up. The children being interviewed, saying they must take on their own responsibility for growing up. Mother has a problem, they understand, even if they don't really like it much. Mother again, standing in the sun, a stream of white Mercedes convertibles flashing by, telling how new all this is, this brave new world, so full of promise, so full of potential. She looked tight and thin-lipped.

Admittedly there's something awry in the personality of anyone who offers up the privacy of their life and family to a television camera. (Remember those aptly-named Louds of Santa Barbara in the "family documentary" on public television a few years back?) But there was something so blatantly explosive here, in the meeting of this woman and this place. Something so clearly visible to the viewer but seemingly unrecognized by the camera or the characters.

A phrase used again and again to explain the miracle of Marin was "I'm untying knots, my knots are coming untied." (Marin County, necessarily, has its own jive talk. "I know where you're coming from" is a favored passphrase. See Cyra McFadden's book, *The Serial*.) These "knots," we are told, are made of such entanglements as marriage, children and their care, family, social concerns, morality—anything and everything that is presumably other than *ME*.

There was a chilling scene of a glib lady named Shirley addressing (in a church) a group of other ladies (seated on the floor) on the subject of how to live. Her text had but one reiterated admonition: *To thine own self be all*. Then you will feel what it is to live. Everything else will fall into place. Even children, you won't believe it, hell they'll *like* being left on their own. It will give them their chance to care for nothing but *them*selves. On and on she went, hardsell as a snake-oil salesman. The ladies' mouths were open, inhaling. The white-haired lady kept nodding yes.

A question hangs in that air like a sword: What is a human being made of? Totally self-contained needs? What holds a human personality together, a whirl of centripetal force? No social ties, no bindings beyond self? One can mistake underlying life structure for mere morality. These knots they keep talking about may or may not need loosening. It is doubtful they often need untying. It is next to certain they don't want cutting.

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My impression is that the lady's knots are being cut. Suppose she wakes up some morning to find herself coming apart? How will she pull herself together? Who will help her? Neighbors of Paradise Drive, Strawberry Point, Belvedere (pleasing prospect), Tiburon (shark)?

There is a scene toward the end of the program in a schoolyard, swings in the background. Ten-year-olds are being interviewed about their lifestyle. They have already learned the Marin language, they speak of their problems and their parents' problems not as children but as psychologically force-fed adults. They talk of divorce as others talk of the weather. Except one. "Where did you live before your parents were divorced?" Edwin Newman asks. She gestures behind her at a lovely hill rising up in the warm sun. "In the yellow house up there," she says. "I don't look at it any more."

Berkeley in the sixties used to feel like a walled city. Crusaders would come riding out of it in Volkswagen buses to reform the world, having recently succeeded in burning down Telegraph Ave. Those were the days of the social potential. Now, across the bay in Marinland, is the day of the human potential. And Marin feels like a great open-air cage, the birds circling, circling.

* * *

Lake Arthur, N.M.—". . . I was rolling my husband's burrito and on the last roll I noticed something which looked like a face," Maria Rubio said in an interview.

A striking pattern of fine skillet burns appeared on the edge of the flour tortilla she was using to make the burrito, and Rubio said she had stood there looking at it, "feeling chills in my body."

What she saw, she said, was an image of the face of Jesus Christ, in the classic mournful romantic pose of the "shroud of Turin," with a wreath of thorns on the head and shoulder-length hair.

Since that day, more than 8,000 persons have visited the home of Eduardo and Maria Rubio, where the wafer-size image is now enclosed in a glass case. . . . They still come, almost daily, mostly from New Mexico but also from New York, Michigan, California and other states.

Maria and her family call the image "Jesus on a tortilla". . . .—Des Moines *Register*, July 24, 1978.

–Kenneth Lash

Some Names to Conjure with in Upcoming Issues of the NAR:

David James Duncan
Beverly Jablons
Lucien Stryk
Daniel Asa Rose
Barry Lopez
Siv Cedering Fox
William Penrod
Andre Dubus
John Judson
Thomas Brush
T. Coraghessan Boyle
Pamela Painter Skeen
Catherine Gammon
George H. Rosen
Stephen Dixon
Besmilr Brigham
Perry Glasser
Edward Hirsch
Suky Hutton
Inara Cedrins
Henry H. Roth

Janette T. Hospital
Terry Spohn
Randall Schluter
Melinda Johns
Tomas N. Santos
Donna Roazen
Ken Denberg
Joseph Meeker
Sigmund Kvaløy
John Lindberg
Eric Johnson
Pat Monaghan
Paul Hunter
Carol Hebald
Alberto Rios
Gary Soto
Wayne Zade
Debora Greger
Peter Wild
Carolyn McKee
Mark Gillette

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Wild Should Wild Remain.

"Man always kills the thing he loves, and so we the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in."

ALDO LEOPOLD

"Integrity is wholeness, the greatest beauty is organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man apart from that...."

ROBINSON JEFFERS

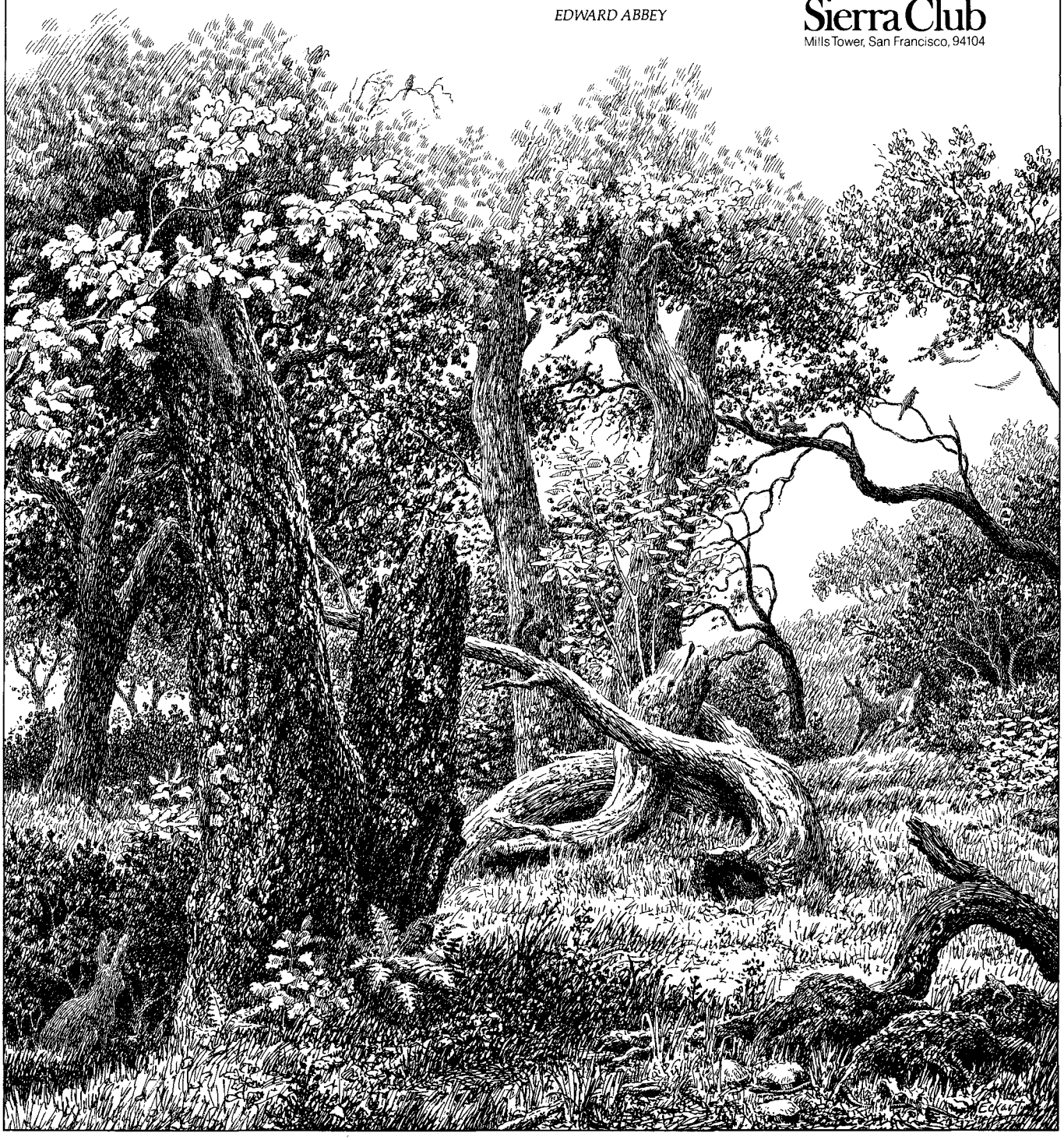
"The love of wilderness is more than a hunger for what is always beyond reach; it is also an expression of loyalty to the earth, (the earth which bore us and sustains us), the only home we shall ever know, the only paradise we ever need—if only we had the eyes to see."

EDWARD ABBEY

"We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds... It is important to us... simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as an idea."

WALLACE STEGNER

Sierra Club
Mills Tower, San Francisco, 94104



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Eduardo Gudiño Kieffer

FOUR STORIES

from *Carta abierta a Buenos Aires violento*

Eduardo Gudiño Kieffer was born on November 2, 1935. He is married and the father of three children. He has a degree in law, but never practised it. He is a journalist and has contributed to a number of Argentine and Latin American periodicals.

Gudiño's works of fiction, all published in Buenos Aires, include three novels: *Para comerte mejor* ("All the Better to Eat You"), Editorial Losada, 1968; *Guía de pecadores* ("Sinners' Guide"), Editorial Losada, 1972; and *Será por eso que la quiero tanto* ("That Must Be Why I Love Her So"), Emecé Editores, 1975. He has also published a nouvelle, *Kokah de lujo* ("De Luxe Kokah"), Editorial Barlovento, 1976, and three collections of short stories: *Fabulario* ("Fable Collection"), Editorial Losada, 1969; *Carta abierta a Buenos Aires violento* ("Open Letter to Violent Buenos Aires"), Emecé Editores, 1970; and *La hora de Mariá y el pájaro de oro* ("Mary's Hour and the Golden Bird"), Editorial Losada, 1975. "Mary's Hour and the Golden Bird" was made into a film, directed by Rudolfo Kuhn, and won two prizes in the Taormina Festival in 1976.

In a letter dated September 8, 1977, the author wrote the following: "In August, 1977, seven years after the appearance of *Open Letter to Violent Buenos Aires* and after fourteen successive editions of the book, the Office of the Secretary of Culture of the Municipality of Buenos Aires declared that the work was to be placed in the category of books 'for limited exhibition'. This censure is intended to prohibit the circulation of the book within the limits of the Federal Capital. It is significant that Jerzy Kosinski's *Being There* ("Desde el jardín") has been placed in the same category."

Translated, from the Spanish, by John G. Copeland

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FOUR STORIES

By Eduardo Gudiño Kieffer

No doubt students have no precise and detailed vision of the society they want—which, moreover, would be premature and irresponsible on their part—but they know perfectly well what they don't want and in the present phase, which is one of preparation and not of revolution, that's sufficient. But where the university is concerned, they do know what they want: they take seriously the democratic principle of self-determination and they want to be educated in self-determination.

—(From the statements of Herbert Marcuse gathered by *Le Monde* and *Le Nouvel Observateur* in Paris, May, 1968.)

1

In which we learn how Gloria understands Pablo and realizes that the youth of fifty years ago was alone, continues to be alone and perhaps will always be alone.

I'm going to go I said but he said no Gloria you stay.

I sat up leaning on my elbow and I said to him open your eyes Pablo please but he stubbornly kept them closed squeezing his eyelids like a little boy really he's a little boy and perhaps I love him so much because he's a little boy, little boy, my little boy all mine from here up to here little boy please.

Nothing.

He kept his eyes closed.

He kept his mouth closed.

From between his closed eyelids a little drop of water escaped tear they call it but I wasn't going to be moved by that.

I told him again to open his eyes.

But he closed them tighter and when he closed them the tear cut the liquid stem which united it to the edge of his lid and it began to slide down his cheek, between the hairs of his full beard, turning around on the hairs of his full beard.

Open your eyes Pablo please look at me Pablo open your eyes Pablo.

Nothing.

Eyes closed, the tear now on the line where his lips met and the pink tip of his tongue catching the tear and pulling it into his mouth and surely swallowing it.

Then I jumped up and accidentally dragged the sheets and covers with me and he was left entirely naked on the bed huddled up and trying to hug himself with his skinny arms and saying cover me up Gloria please don't be an idiot I'm cold I'm freezing to death it's so damn cold cover me up for God's sake.

And I covered him up and then he opened his eyes and his brown eyes were all wet so wet they didn't look brown but transparent with flecks of gold.

And then I said again I'm going to go Pablo.

And then he said again no Gloria you stay you stay and don't argue, you stay because I'm telling you to.

And he looked at me with his eyes open now and empty now and brown as if they were made of wood his eyes brown now.

And I got mad and getting mad gave me goose pimples and even though I was shivering I went to the bathroom and got under a cold shower and the cruel jets whipped me and hurt me and I was trembling then under the frozen shower when I heard his voice Pablo's saying something to me but the noise of the shower kept me from understanding his words and then I turned off the shower and stood in the tub dripping my hair all wet and glued to my face looking at him at Pablo.

Why do you want to go Pablo said.

To be with you idiot I said.

He lowered his head and was so ridiculous the poor guy had only put on his overcoat and from the part below the overcoat his skinny hairy legs stuck out and made me feel tenderness for him I should say I felt again that fucking shitty tenderness for him.

To be with you idiot I repeated and so all wet I ran to hug him and he opened the overcoat which was enormous on him and held me to his body and enclosed me in his hard skinny arms and the two of us stood there hugging with the overcoat around us without moving the two of us I wish it could always be the two of us standing there both of us without panting both of us alone both of us always both of us but the word *always* doesn't exist.

To be with you to be with you to be with you I repeated.

That's not reason enough he said.

Nothing is enough I said feeling stupid feeling like saying a famous phrase like the ones people say before breathing their last breath long live the country even if I die or I'm dying happy we have fought the enemy.

And then I added forgive me Pablo I love you Pablo I'm a fool Pablo I love you Pablo.

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And although I thought it was a line from Migré or from Nené Cascallar I repeated I love you Pablo I love you Pablo.

And I wasn't embarrassed to say I love you Pablo.

No Gloria you stay here.

Last week when I arrived Pablo was pulling all the posters of Che off the walls all the posters of Che and he took all the books about Che from the shelves and threw them in the incinerator.

I went in he didn't pay any attention to me he just said hi he kept on throwing things in the incinerator I took off my coat looked for cigarettes in my bag I lit one served myself a gin and then sat down to watch him.

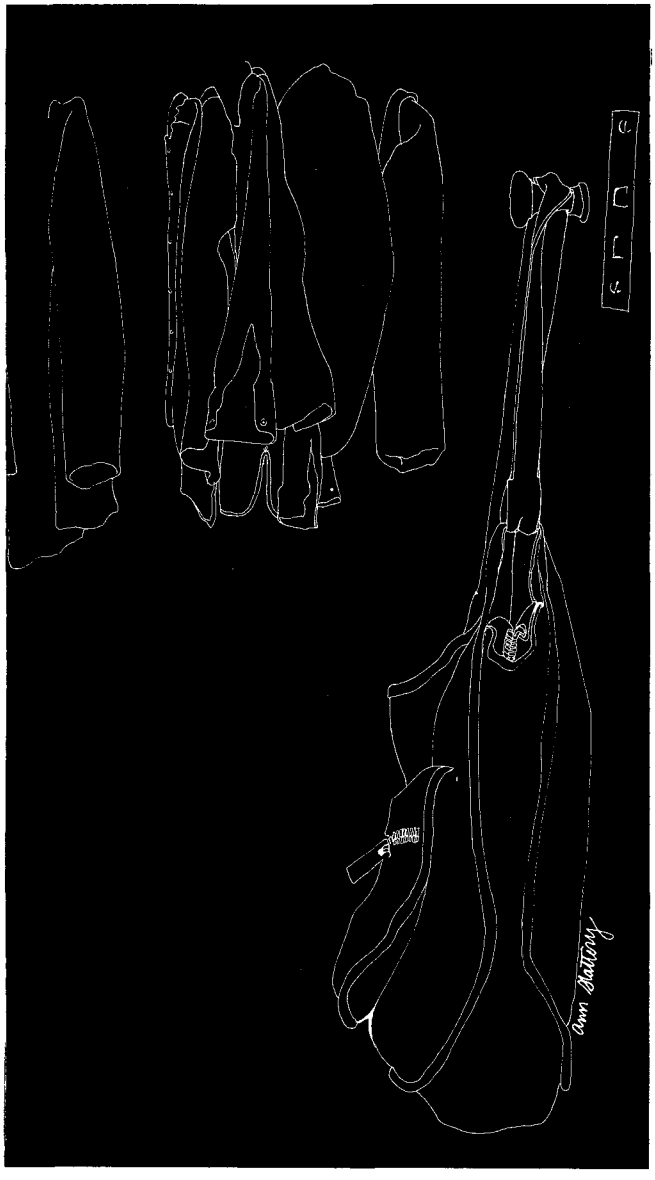
You're crazy I said.

No.

Crazy as hell I said all of a sudden you've gone as crazy as hell.

No I haven't.

He came and sat down beside me took the cigarette from my lips took a long drag and put it between my lips again then he took a swallow of gin and said wipe off your lips before you drink or you'll get lipstick all over the glasses.



Pour yourself your own glass and don't worry about it I said.

So you think I'm crazy he said.

It's obvious I don't see why you have to make a bonfire out of Che's things.

I got my head together and it was time he said.

I don't understand I said.

You've got to understand Gloria.

What do I have to understand.

You have to understand that Che doesn't mean anything to us any more.

He's a symbol I said don't tell me now that he died for nothing since you always said that what he was doing was right that it was the only road he had left that he was right that he was a hero.

You're right I said all that but I'm not saying it any more.

I don't understand.

I'm not saying it any more because the hero has been transformed into a commercial product if you don't think so look at how they sell posters of Che everywhere they don't prohibit books about Che anywhere and to have a poster of Che in your room is OK it's like having a poster of Cortázar and another of Terence Stamp understand.

And what's wrong with that?

What's wrong with that what's wrong with that is that all the little old ladies buy it because they say hey he was really good-looking.

I began to understand.

To have a poster of Che in your bedroom or in your study is the same as old people having a crucifix at the head of their beds.

You mean it doesn't mean anything.

I mean that now it doesn't mean anything that it's another stereotype and besides it's an excuse.

I can understand the stereotype thing but the excuse . . .

An old excuse listen all you need is the Che poster to feel heroic to recognize the need for justice to brag you're a rebel and to stay at home nice and quiet listening to Bob Dylan or Joan Baez or Nacha Guevara who protest too and you can listen to them without the least risk and especially since they're so in.

But Che was really sincere.

I know Gloria I know what I'm talking about is not what he was but what he is now or rather the thing they've made out of him.

Who's made him what?

Who I don't know perhaps some guys who are sharper than we are who realized that letting him be changed into an icon was the best way to neutralize him or maybe we ourselves because we're complete fools or have so many complexes and we needed him so we could cover up our emptiness and all our deficiencies with his image or with what they wrote about him; they've turned Che into a thing now it's something like a nice mural we cover up the enormous hole of our inaction with.

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Or out of cowardice.

You said it.

I was silent suddenly realizing suddenly understanding so many things suddenly.

But you're getting rhetorical I said.

Forgive me.

No you forgive me I said resting a hand on his shoulder and then letting it slip to his neck forgive me Pablo I do understand.

He stood up and began to walk from one side of the room to the other afterward he pulled off a little piece of paper that had been left on the wall crumpled it in his hand came to where I was and kissed me on the head.

I'm sad he said.

Yes you are sad but you're into something else.

No.

I always know when he lies how could I help knowing when he lies right at that moment he had turned his head and with the tip of his shoe stamped out a butt that was already out.

What are you up to Pablo.

Nothing why do you think that what's going on in your mind.

What are you up to Pablo.

I'm going to look for a cigarette.

Look at me.

He looked at me wih his brown eyes he looked at me a long time and then he said OK look the fact is that.

And I wasn't ashamed to say I love you Pablo.

No Gloria you stay.

I remembered what he had told me I remembered some things he repeated mechanically in bed I remembered tear gas dissipates fast it's only efficient for a little while and you can make a pretty efficient gas mask with a handkerchief soaked in lemon juice and also the cops' masks are uncomfortable they block their view you can pull them off them easily and they become the main victims also you can build a bonfire remember in Rosario remember in Córdoba remember when they said we were destructive and seditious because we burned the benches at the college and we burned them just to stop the gas.

I remembered the gas but I also remembered other things other words of Pablo I feel sorry for the cops in spite of everything you realize we're not against them we're against something a lot bigger Gloria against something which is not just happening here in Buenos Aires against the system I don't want to be alienated I don't want to be a machine and it was then that I said Pablo you're getting rhetorical and you're not telling the whole truth.

I remembered that then he was quiet for a while and then he said it's probably not the whole truth but it's part maybe you want them to educate you at the University to be a screw or a nut in an immense machine that functions only for itself; I remembered my question but tell me what side you're working for and he answered for ours for youth's for the students' you realize that stuff about left and right that's on the surface it's really only a label and then I said again you're getting rhetorical Pablo.

I think that I said it to hold him back.

I think that I said it so he wouldn't go ahead with what was perhaps a beautiful marvelous madness a kind of road to the Holy Sepulchre where the one buried would be Pablo.

I remembered. Each and every one of Pablo's words.

I remembered the examples Pablo cited one after the other; I remembered the student of the University of Colorado driving a tractor into an electric pole and plunging ten towns into darkness, I remembered the nightmare of Cleveland the twenty-third of July nineteen sixty-seven as Pablo told it and that May in Paris in nineteen sixty-eight as Pablo told it I remembered the forty-five thousand students out on the street in peaceful demonstrations in twenty West German cities and the violent repression of the government I remembered the four thousand boys and girls occupying the University of Warsaw at the beginning of sixty-eight beaten by the police and the workers' militia when they shouted "Gestapo!" I remembered the two thousand five hundred students parading through the streets of Prague as a symbol of protest because of the bad conditions in the University dormitories and beaten too by the police of President Novotny I remembered the University section of Belgrade blocked off by young people and the Clínicas area of Córdoba blocked off by young people and the deaths in Corrientes and in Rosario.

I remembered.

I remembered Pablo speaking to me about the support for the group of outlawed subversives shouting against atomic war opposing the Dutch authorities but also those anywhere in the world I remembered the protests of North American boys and girls against the invasion of Cambodia and the words of Julius Lester on Pablo's lips and my saying but Pablo that's Black Power and doesn't concern us it's the struggle of whites against blacks in the United States and Pablo saying to me maybe you can disassociate yourself from that maybe you can wash your hands.

I remembered.

I remembered from imagination to power. I remembered also that other sentence repeated by Pablo that sentence which someone wrote once without my ever knowing who that someone was that sentence that says something like the young people of the industrialized countries don't want to be changed into the trained monkeys of the bureaucracy, whether it's capitalist or socialist I remembered everything I remembered everything I remembered everything how could I not remember how can I not remember.

I remembered the occupation of five buildings of Columbia University to demand an end to the activities of an institute which conducted research for war use.

I remembered Pablo what you told me about the reaction of the Gaullist government in May of nineteen sixty-eight and of the refusal of the CGT and the Communist Party to participate in the movement under the pretext that "that, as a reaction, would have brought fascism and the slaughter of the people."

I remembered the Russians in Budapest and in Prague.

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I remembered the marines in Vietnam and the four students who were killed at Kent State University when they protested against the invasion of Cambodia by the United States.

I remembered the book Pablo and the sentences of that book which we listened to later in that movie that made you cry I remembered yes I still remember listen I still remember. Listen.

"Why is peace intolerable to them?"

Listen.

"Today the world is not divided between East and West. We've overcome all thinking which is based on the opposition of extremes."

Listen.

"Words are symbols too. Only feelings are real."

Listen.

"Peace would be the death knell for big monopolies who base their power and their increased production on the arms race. In the course of the eighteen years which have passed since World War II more than eighteen local conflicts have broken out; if they have been contained it is because of fear of a total devastation which acts as a counterweight to the bellicose nature of the great powers."

Listen Pablo listen. See how I remember?

"If, instead of dedicating it to military expenditures, half of the budget of the State went to schools, to sports fields, to hospital equipment, to industrial development, wouldn't we have a better life?"

Listen Pablo. I've memorized it. Memorized.

"Blessed are the peace makers for they will be called the children of God."

I remembered and I realized that we were still alone that we had always been alone didn't the Manifest of Córdoba sense that back in nineteen eighteen fifty years ago when it said: "if they wish to keep on mocking us and brutalizing us in the name of order we proclaim loudly our right to rebel."

I remembered but also I felt deep inside that solitude of so many millions alone even if we cry out together and everything seemed to me so absurd so puerile so earnestly so vainly heroic and so sensibly stupid.

It didn't make me ashamed to say I love you Pablo I love you Pablo I love you Pablo.

It doesn't make me ashamed to say I love you Pablo I love you Pablo I love you Pablo now that I am alone still more alone amid the millions of solitary people how can I not be more alone since you went out and left me locked in and I don't know how I'll get out of here.

It doesn't make me ashamed to repeat over and over in a soft whisper iloveyoupabloiloveyoupabloiloveyoupabloiloveyoupablo while I tear up all your photos and all your letters and all your books and throw them in the incinerator now that I've listened to the radio and heard those few words which mix in with your words echoing in my head now that I've turned off the radio group of extremists college occupied intervention forces of order a single victim identified as Pablo Argüello the bullet was fired from a group of demonstrators college evacuated absolute calm prevails it doesn't make me ashamed to repeat iloveyoupabloiloveyoupablo and tear up all your images including that enlargement of you in the foreground you used to make a few bucks in that cigarette ad iloveyoupabloiloveyoupablo and just because I love you Pablo I'm getting rid of everything that had anything to do with you of everything that might be or was your face your gestures your smile or your life. I'm burning photos and I'm burning letters and I'm burning books and I'm burning your clothes too because I don't want you to turn into anything too Pablo for you to be an excuse for me Pablo for your courage or your madness or your unconsciousness to make me feel like a heroine or a victim Pablo I don't want now I realize it Pablo I don't want to be a coward I love you Pablo I don't want to be a coward and hide my cowardice behind my memory of you Pablo like you hide a hole in the wall with a poster of Che. □

Perfumed and learned Blanca, language
is a collective institution
whose laws impose themselves
on individuals and it transmits itself
in a coercive way from generation to generation.
Social signs, Blanca, little sounds,
little burps,
And once there was someone who wished to reduce
mathematics and logic to linguistics
and all mental life to speech.

—Fernando de Giovanni, "Keno"

2

In which Blanquita (18) speaks with her dear mommy (41) in a dialogue which reveals the intense communication between generations.

Mommy dear was stretched out on the purple shag rug of her dressing-room, leafing through *Votre Beauté*, stark naked under the ultraviolet lamp which was focused

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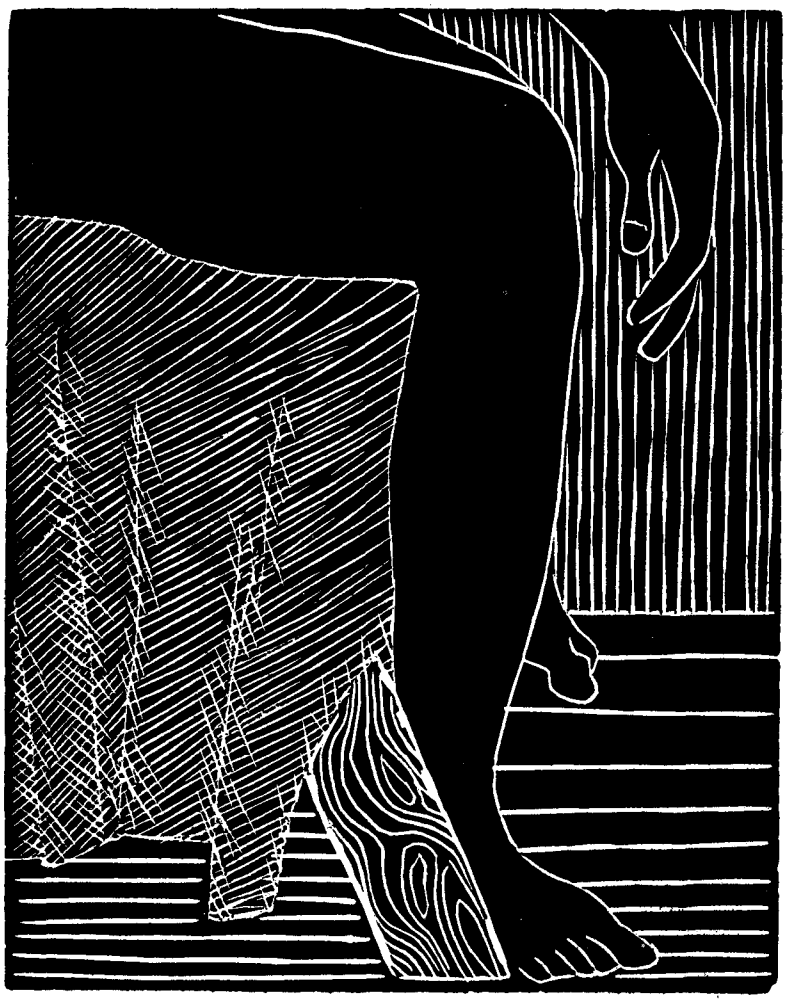
on her legs, so smooth so firm so pretty much prettier than mine.

I told her lend me the Fiat 600 mommy dear mommy darling mommy dear-darling she said maaarvelous really spleeendid and I said or rather I asked what's so maaarvelous so really spleeendid about the Fiat 600 it's a mess since I wrecked it the other night when I wrapped it around the light pole on Libertador you remember; dear dear mommy raised the magazine and said again this is maaarvelous really spleeendid look Blanquita and she showed me the page the photo the title découvrez ce sein and then mommy read me la mode est aux robes transparentes et aux décolletés vertigineux and she stood up and her breasts were really very nice, perfect, you don't need treatments mommy I said I swear you're fine will you lend me the Fiat or not. Do you think so Blanquita dear mommy darling said looking at herself in the mirror with her hands on her hips observing herself critically and I said I think you should tell me if you're going to lend me the car or not and mommy dear answered I'm still pretty good.



Then I sat down on the floor I unplugged the ultraviolet lamp and I said well I'm going to get it out of the garage anyhow at least tell me where the keys are and mommy dear asked what love what keys.

The keys to the Fiat 600 mommy sweetest, I'm asking you for the car I don't know if you understood me I have to go out, ay Blanquita did you notice all the new things now it's the maxiskirt by the way I haven't seen your maxiskirt why didn't you put on your maxiskirt and while she asked me she leafed through the magazine again and said maaarvelous it's Simone Laubé's column it's fantastic doesn't miss a thing about beauty tips next month when I go to Paris I'm going to go to Jeanne Piaubert's or Pier Augé's by the way Blanquita you should think it over and come with me I don't understand why you don't want to go to Europe there are even the museums you like.

Yes but now I need the car mother I said dear mother said I think I went to L'Orangerie once and I thought how tremendous it would be to have that Van Gogh in the livingroom just imagine Blanquita right over the fireplace we'd take down the Soldi after all everyone has a Soldi and just imagine Viñas Arrigue's wife's face I said Viñas Arrigue's wife's face doesn't have to be imagined it's one of those things that just exists and please listen to me tell me where are the keys to the Fiat 600.

Six hundred thousand pesos mother dear said six hundred thousand pesos it cost Madgalena for the clasp to her pearl necklace that's awful I think that's too much I don't know why people spend so much on frivolous things but it's a diamond clasp and tell me if that isn't too much.

Shit I said and dear mommy said ay dear how lovely for you to say shit how modern of course it's better in French merde and they even have a verb enmerder and I said here they say screw and it's the same thing and shit tell me where the keys are to the car because I'm in a hurry I have a date and it's getting late; ah afternoon is the best time to go shopping said mommy dear and you'd better go the Promenade Alvear because Florida is impossible and no one goes to Santa Fe with those terrible people everywhere. Mommy dear was still facing the mirror looking at her profile and experimenting with how her hair looked piled to one side and half pulled up and she said to me what do you think shall I go to Christian's or do my hair myself tonight I'm going to the theater at the Colón I said do what you like or do whatever you please because anger made me super correct and I added listen carefully I need the car now tell me where the keys are I have to see somebody it's important and mommy dear said I like that Blanquita you must keep in mind that you are important and do important things I began to laugh and I said it's super-unimportant look I'm going to go to bed with Juan Antonio and mommy dear stood still and looked straight at me all of a sudden and said how horrible child how horrible what you've just said to you own mother who gave you life.

And I asked her if it seemed so horrible to her for me to go to bed with Juan Antonio and she said horrible I hope young lady you won't have anything to do with Jorge Antonio I said mother you're confused about his last name it doesn't matter what does matter is what I told you I was

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going to do with him did you hear or didn't you hear what I was going to do with him, what I am going to do with him in a little while.

Mommy dear looked at me a little upset and said I didn't hear the only thing I heard is that horrible last name Antonio just imagine if I were to be a relative of that horrible Peronista Jorge Antonio child what a terrible role I said mommy Antonio isn't his last name it's Juan's second name his name is Juan Antonio Pierino mommy dear sighed and said well Pierino isn't too bad it's all right I guess one can say that he has noble relatives in Italy at any rate people may believe it the terrible thing is for someone to associate him with Jorge Antonio; mommy dear said all that and put on her bra and panties and I said by the way I took some of your underwear because mine wasn't right for the occasion, what occasion mommy dear asked, I just told you mommy I'm going to go to bed with Juan Antonio and it won't be the first time and I think he's great I swear I think he's great I think he's great listen to me I think he's great because he's crude and he looks down on me and because he thinks I'm a spoiled kid and then he even hits me think of that mommy he hits me he insults me he says filthy things to me and makes me do things that would blow your mind but what I'm telling you is that I like to do them I like to humiliate myself crawl in front of him ask him on my knees please love me because I'm proud that a guy like him loves me and he does love me even though he says I'm a sad case and an idiot and a fool with no sense of reality I think he's great because I wish you knew what he looks like he's very tall with his fingernails all bitten off with enormous hands and when he puts them on me I feel like dying and besides mommy dear, just so you'll know, besides that he works in a packing house, he's twenty-eight and every time I go to bed with him he gets at least five thousand pesos from me.

Mommy dear was finishing putting on her stockings, biting her tongue because putting on stockings is so difficult, when she finished putting her stockings on she looked at me and asked what were you saying dear weren't you talking to me.

Then I said mommy go straight to hell and she said ay Blanquita I don't know why you're so aggressive at times toward your mother I stood up and said ciao and please shut up, mommy dear said but why are you in such a hurry wait a second I'll finish getting dressed and if you're going to mass at the Socorro as you were saying to me I'll go with you, look for the keys to the Fiat 600 they're in the second drawer of my dressing-table. □

3

Je nomme violence une audace au repos amoureuse des périls. On la distingue dans un regard, une démarche, un sourire, et c'est en vous qu'elle produit les remous. Elle vous démonte. Cette violence est un calme qui vous agite.

—Jean Genet, "Journal du Voleur"

In which Mario's and Skinny's usual "work" is transformed accidentally into a crime or perhaps, if you can believe the unbelievable, into a case of legitimate self-defense.

Mario and I lean against the wall, smoking, acting sort of dumb, near a men's room, in a place where we can see guys go in and out. There are a lot of people, too many people, in Buenos Aires. And worse here, in the great hall of Retiro Station. All of them running, all in a hurry, all about to miss their trains. A bad spot, a bad spot. I'd told Mario so, but he answered that it was better to be in a crowd, no one hardly noticed you, the corner of Charcas and Callao was full of pigs, just last night the cops picked up Carlitos and Moncho who were standing there minding their own business, and they kept them till noon today. Just for vagrancy, they said, to check them out, they said. But they didn't find out anything. You keep your mouth closed, that's the best way, you say that you were there killing time or waiting for a bus, if they believe you fine, if not, that's OK too. That's why Mario said that Retiro was best because no one pays any attention here and you can always get some action, of course they're not guys with a lot of dough but when the guys feel like it they can scare up the dough somewhere. Anyway, I insisted that it was a bad place. Just in case, to give us a better chance, I put on my red sweater and my jeans that fit tight on my legs and around the crotch and are faded and patched, they like that, that gets them right away. The idea of standing near the men's room was Mario's, he's a lot sharper than me, he's been at it for quite a while and he knows, he said that the fags who are on the prowl always head for the rest-rooms but it's better not to be seen inside, where there may be guards, it's better outside, they look at you, you look at them, they ask you for a light, well, things like that, there are so many ways to begin.

And we lean against the wall, Mario and me. I get bored with waiting so long. An hour and a half. I throw away a cigarette, I crush it with my gym shoe (that too, basketball shoes, they seem to like them).

"I've had it," I say.

Mario doesn't answer. He smokes, stretches, scratches his head and a little dandruff falls on his shoulders.

"If you didn't like Charcas and Callao, we could have walked around Lavalle," I say.

"Naw," he says.

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"The movies, hey, the movies."

"Quit bugging me. They're full of cops, too. The whole place is full of cops. The best thing is to go where there's lots of people."

"Yes, but what kind of people? Look, look . . . Anyone tried to pick you up?"

"Be patient, Skinny, be patient."

"Patience, patience . . . What I need is dough, not patience. And we're not going to get any here, remember what I'm telling you. Give me a cigarette."

He gives me one. I light it. I inhale, blow out the smoke, the people pass by and keep on passing by and passing by. A bad place this one, really. I'm sleepy. Can you get moss-covered leaning against a wall? I close my eyes.

"*Ei*, señor, *plis* . . ."

I open my eyes. The guy is standing there. Blonde, good-looking, kind of young (he must be my age), smiling, with a really neat outfit. Could he be? He's not the kind of guy you expect. They're almost always old, or if they're young you can tell they're queer. I look at Mario. Mario looks at me and shrugs his shoulders.

"It's up to you," he says. "I won't get involved. Didn't I tell you there'd be some action?"

"*Plis*," the guy says again. "*Poder iú me indicar Flourida strit?*"

"Florida?"

"*Flourida, ies, caie Flourida* . . ."

The guy had made a mistake. He must have left the Plaza and instead of turning into Florida, he went the opposite way and wound up here.

"*Iú inglish?*" I ask.

"*Nou, american. Chicagou* . . ."

"I'm going to see chi-cago," Mario says without looking at me. "Get rid of him, this guy doesn't understand, tell him where the street is and that's it."

He turns his back and pretends he isn't listening, but I know that he's not missing a word. I look at the guy again, the neat American, who is still smiling, waiting. No, for sure he doesn't want anything, the only thing he needs is for someone to tell him where Florida Street is located. His outfit is terrific: corduroy pants, a red sweater and a suede jacket like the one I always wanted. He has a magazine in his hand, it must be an American magazine. He looks at me, smiles, he's alert and waiting for me to talk. But I don't know any English at all and from what I've heard so far, he doesn't know much Argentinian. Of course, it would be enough to make a gesture, to point. And nevertheless I say, "If *iú* to want, me go with . . ."

Beside me, Mario's body begins to shake with laughter.

"*Iú* Tarzan of the Apes, Skinny speak like Tarzan," he says without looking at me. And he laughs, the dope. He's going to spoil my routine.

The American didn't understand, because he repeats, "*Caie Flourida, plis.*"

I bite my lips, trying to remember what they say in the movies and finally I get it out.

"*Camán* . . .," I say, beginning to walk toward the exit.

"*Iú llevar caie Flourida? Tankiu* . . .," the American says and he walks beside me.

"Wait, Skinny," Mario says. "I'm not going to miss this, I'll go with you, it's like one of those James Bond things."

Now we're in a half run-down café, on the corner of Florida and Paraguay. We drink whiskey which is something we never do. I assume that the American will pay. We begin to understand each other better, although Mario almost shits from laughing. Outside, people pass by, some terrific girls; the American seems happy.

"Me travel Latin America," he explains in his broken Spanish. "Me want to know *evrizin*."

I understand part of what he says. The "*evrizin*" was beyond me.

"*Ies verigud*," I say. "*Aryentain* pretty country. Buenos Aires big, *veri* big . . ."

"*Ou ies, e veribig citi, uónderful citi* . . ."

"Now he's screwed you," Mario says. "You didn't get half of that."

"Shut up, idiot," I say.

I'm looking at the American's suede jacket. Jeez, what an outfit. And his face? Perfect. Almost like a drawing.

"*Iú student*?" he asks.

"I call Gerardo," I say.

"You dope, he asked if you're a student," Mario says. "You're even dumber than me."

"No, me not student," I say then. "Me work . . ."

Mario begins to laugh again. Can't he stop laughing?

"Work. In taxi," he says.

"*Ou!* the American seems surprised. "*Taxi, car, ies, ies, ai anderstan.*"

"Mario, you better shut up. Don't be a big mouth, you'll scare him off, I tell you."

Mario swallows his laughter, drowning it in whiskey.

"*Mai neim is Bob*," says the American, and suddenly he shoves his hand across the table, grabs mine which is playing with a peanut shell and squeezes it really hard.

"Glad to know you," I say stupidly.

"Bob, bobo, bobito," hums Mario between his teeth, mocking him, calling him a fool.

"*Mi veri hapi nau*, mi want to know *aryentain piple, iang piple* . . ."

"Iang piple?"

I didn't understand a word. The American realizes that.

"*Ueit*," he says.

He puts his hand in his pocket, takes out a dictionary about this big, searches rapidly and then looks at me triumphantly.

"*Jóuvenes*," mi want to know *jóuvenes* of *Aryentina*. Mi know that not have gauchos, mi want to know *normal piple, iang piple, jóuvenes laik mi.*"

"Mi be young," I say.

"Me too, buddy," Mario says.

Now the American enthusiastically shakes the hand of Mario, who has stopped laughing and says, "Delighted."

"*Nau ui ar frends*," says the American. And he explains, again with the help of the dictionary, "*Frends, amigous, nau iú and iú and mí amigous*. . . ."

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Mario bends over, seemingly to tie his shoestrings, for a second he brushes against me and whispers so that only I can hear him:

"He doesn't understand, Skinny, but he must be loaded with dollars."

I look at the American. Bob. Bobo, bobito. Fool. Boy, what clothes! I smile at him. He smiles at me. We smile at each other. Dollars.

We convinced him. He didn't want to, but we convinced him. No, what did we mean, go back to the hotel? If we were *amigous,* he had to see our room, *veri* simple, he had to have a drink with us, *ies, plis,* oh Bob, *camán;* the American laughed, he didn't understand very well, it was hard to explain to him and at the same time to con him, finally he said *okay letsgou* and he stood up, leaving five bills on the table, the waiter bowed and went with us to the door, the American said *tankiu aryentain veri kaind piple, uait piple, uónderful.* Now the three of us are in a cab. The American talks and talks. I don't understand what he's saying. I have my arms crossed and with my fingertips I can touch the suede jacket without his realizing it. So soft, so soft. Man, what a neat jacket!

The American looks pretty surprised at everything. He hadn't expected this: a second-floor hotel room with only one window which is always closed. Two beds, unmade, butts on the floor, dirty socks, the lavatory in one corner. It seems like the first time I've seen the room, it seems like I see it through the blue eyes of the American and what I see is damp, cold, gray, sticky; I don't like what I see, I don't even like my face which soon confronts me from the mirror that hangs over the lavatory. No, I don't like it. But it's me. Today I don't like myself, yesterday I liked myself, the guys liked me, they'd do anything for me, they gave me all kinds of money, they let themselves be humiliated, picked on, spat on, yesterday they liked me, but not today, today I don't like myself, this room is despicable, filthy, garbage; Americans' rooms have wall-to-wall carpeting and big windows with panes which always look out onto a yard with grass where a girl in a plaid skirt runs by and she has a sheepdog named Lassie after her; Americans' rooms are large and bright and sunny and they have pennants and a framed picture of Kennedy and suddenly I see it, I see it with my brown eyes the way Bob sees my room with his blue eyes, I see Bob's room where there also is a picture of Bob and his parents and the three of them smile the way Americans smile and my red pullover is a warm, soft, suede jacket, I realize my hair isn't black but blonde, my eyes aren't brown but blue, I'm Bob, I'm in my large, bright, sunny room with pennants and a framed picture of Kennedy and suddenly no, it's my face again, the one I liked yesterday and that I don't like today, in the mirror, looking at me, and Mario's voice that just erased everything when he said:

"But what are you doing, you nut? Looking at yourself? Think you're Nélida Lobato? Come on, there's a bottle of wine on the shelf over there, give some to our 'amigou'."

I turn around. Bob has sat down on the edge of the bed, he doesn't seem surprised now, he smiles at me, he motions to me to sit down beside him and says, "*Itsol rei, itsol rei. . . .*"

I don't sit down. I look for the wine, there are only two glasses, I serve the two glasses, I give one to Bob and the other to Mario.

"Health," Mario says.

"*Chiers,*" Bob says and raises his glass, takes a swallow, makes a face, hands it to me and says, "*Iú nau.*"

"Don't drink it, Skinny," Mario says, sure that the other doesn't understand anything. "Give it to him; after the whiskeys and without eating, two glasses ought to knock him out."

Bob drinks. He looks at everything. He smiles. He speaks. We nod. We smile. We speak. The three of us are sitting on the edge of the bed. Bob keeps on drinking. One glass, two glasses, three more glasses of wine.

"*Ai laik aryentain piple. Chiers.*"

He leans on me. I feel the softness of his suede jacket. I put my hand on his sleeve, then I let it slide down slowly, very slowly, as if I were caressing something terribly soft. The hair on my arms stands on end.

"Will you lend it to me?" I say.

This time Bob has understood perfectly. Really, no words were needed. He jumps to his feet, saying *batofcours its oll yoars* and he takes off the jacket and gives it to me. I stand up, too, I begin to take off my pullover very slowly, conscious of the effect this always has (on the other guys, anyhow), I stand there a while naked from the waist up, just a little while, so he can see that I have broad shoulders and a small waist and hips, but this doesn't seem to matter to him, then I put the suede jacket on right over my bare skin and I go to look at myself in the mirror and I see myself in the suede jacket and once more I begin to like myself. Yes. I like myself.

"OK, Skinny, you look good in it," Mario says, stretched out on the bed, pushing off his right shoe with his left foot and then the left shoe with his right foot.

Bob slaps me on the back and applauds. He acts like a kid.

"*Yast laik mi,*" he says.

I look at him, frowning. Then he explains.

"*Nau iú laik mi. . . .*"

He points to me, points to himself.

"I like you," I murmur.

I feel kind of dizzy. No. It can't all turn out badly now. I'm sure the guy isn't like those others, he's fallen into the trap like an idiot, but I don't think about letting him get away. Pretending to caress the jacket, I get to the inside pocket, feel the wallet, take it out on the sly, with my back to Bob so he won't see, and slide it inside my jeans, between my briefs and my skin, and the wallet is there, next to my penis, the dollars are there, next to my penis.

"Well done, Skinny."

Mario's words indicate that he's followed the operation closely. We've done it before. I smile at him. Bob is still keyed up. He drinks some more wine. He sits down on the bed again, then lies down. His head rests on Mario's left thigh. Mario's hand snakes its way down from his chest to Bob's head, Mario's hand begins to caress Bob's hair. I feel something like a chill, something like cold anger, it's my hand that should be on Bob's head, or

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my head that should be Bob's head and Bob's hand should be on my head. Mario's hand is superfluous, Mario is superfluous, but it's better for there to be two of us so that things will turn out right, both of us always work together, it's safer.

Bob half closes his eyes, he smiles, he yawns, it all seems very natural to him, *aim hapi,* he says, you can tell he's ready now, his voice which was clear before is fuzzy now, it's hard for him to control his tongue, I bend over to look for the package of cigarettes which I deliberately let fall to the floor and I use the opportunity to take out Bob's wallet and to hide it in a pile of dirty tee-shirts beneath the bed. Then I straighten up. Mario's hand is still on Bob's head. Mario's fingers are still entangled in Bob's hair, it should be my hand, it should be my fingers; Bob smiles beatifically, his blue eyes, somewhat clouded by the wine, look at me.

I take off the jacket.

"*Ou nou, plis, its ioars, its a gift. . . .*"

He tries to get up, but Mario's caress has been transformed into something else, Mario's hand is a claw which clutches Bob's hair; I feel my fingers stiffen and curve. Bob lies motionless, surprised. His eyes keep on looking at me, but now with another expression, a questioning, incredulous expression.

I too look straight and hard at him.

I let the jacket fall to the floor.

I take off my shoes.

Then I take off my jeans very slowly: first I unbuckle my wide belt, then I pull down the zipper, then I let them slip down by themselves, barely sliding down, only helping them with one or two movements of my hips and knees, until they finally fall to the floor; then I take out one foot, then the other foot; I stand there, stand on my jeans, my legs apart, naked except for my briefs.

"Actually, you're a queer, too," says Mario who has not taken his eyes off me.

I don't pay any attention to him. I know him. He's one of those who pose as being very butch, but then he has his moments.

I look at Bob.

Bob looks at me with his eyes wide open.

He looks into my eyes with his eyes, then his eyes slip down to my chest, to my navel, stop a moment lower down. I move my hand to that place, I leave it there, motionless, I take a step forward, toward Bob.

"*Animals! Bastards!*"

He struggles savagely, leaving a handful of his hair in Mario's fingers and Mario grabs him in both arms. But the American is strong, he breaks free, turns around, punches him on the jaw; Mario is half dazed and Bob takes advantage of the chance and gets up and rushes at me; he is about to hit me but he stops. The anger in his eyes has disappeared. His lips and chin tremble. He stutters.

"*Iú . . . iú tuu. . . .*"

I feel too naked, with my arms dangling beside my body, unable to do anything, not even able to get out a word to tell him to stand aside, that I see Mario getting up slowly, I see Mario taking the wine bottle, that I see Mario raising the bottle and striking it violently across the nape of Bob's neck. I see Bob's eyes roll back, his head falling back, his body falling forward against mine; me catching him so he won't hit the floor hard and then kneeling and laying him down there, stretched out, and moving back, and looking at the thread of blood that emerges from the place where he got hit. Mario is standing behind him, with the bottle, miraculously intact, still in his hand.

I move away.

Mario sets the bottle down, bends over the unconscious body, turns it over, touches it, puts his hand on its chest.

Then he looks at me and says:

"He's alive, at least. I thought I'd hit him too hard."

I close my eyes, I think I'm going to vomit, I go to the lavatory, I vomit.

I have a bitter taste in my mouth. I rinse it out. When I turn around I see Mario. But what is he doing?

"But what are you doing?"

Mario is feverishly undressing Bob. It's an effort because he's unconscious. He has already taken off his sweater, he begins to undo his pants.

"What are you doing," I shout.

He keeps on stripping him, he keeps on stripping him, without looking at me, while he says:

"But don't you see how he is? He's blonde, he's young, you're not going to let him go just like that, are you? . . ."

"We've already got the dough. The dollars. I hid the wallet under the bed. . . ."

"I saw you . . . Skinny, I saw you. But after putting up with sickening old men every night don't tell me you don't feel like taking advantage of this."

He says "this" and stops, looking at me defiantly, showing me the very white body of Bob, who only has his socks on. I can't look or think. I'm cold.

"Besides," Mario adds, "it's the only way to keep him from turning us in later. It's one thing to go to the station and say they took your wallet, it's another to say that the worse thing is that they. . . ."

"Shut up," I say very softly.

"Well, if now you've decided to become a saint, that's your business."

He takes off his pants fast, kneels beside Bob, reaches out with one of his hands and puts it on Bob's thigh, looks at him, smiles, a little thread of spit falls from his lips to his chest.

"Let him alone, Mario. He's unconscious."

"So much the better. Then he won't object."

Now I see him stretching out on the floor, putting one of his legs over the other's leg. And in the body of the other, in Bob's body, I suddenly see my own body, as if I were seeing it through Bob's blue eyes; I see my body there with only my socks on in Bob's body with only his socks on, like in a lightning flash I see Bob's large bright and sunny room I see the wine bottle which lies there I see Mario's body now sliding over Bob's body over my body I take the bottle and I beat it on Mario's head once, twice, three times, ten times; afterward I turn him over and with

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the broken part, with the sharp pieces of glass, I cut parallel lines from Mario's forehead to his groin; the blood comes out first in little drops like a line of dots, then in little threads which run down Mario's body over Mario's body over Mario's skin which slip like little streams of blood over Mario's body not over Bob's body my body.

I give him something to drink.

I help him get dressed.

He still doesn't understand very well what went on. I take him to the lavatory, I scoop water in my hands and wet his face and hair with it.

Suddenly Bob seems to wake up.

He looks at me.

He looks at Mario's corpse.

A grimace appears on his mouth.

"Don't worry," I say. "You weren't involved. I swear he never touched you, he didn't do anything to you, keep cool, just be calm and take a cab, be calm and go to your hotel, and don't say anything to anyone, I'll call a cop in an hour or two, so that they won't even imagine you were here, Bob, keep cool, go but keep cool, no one will find out."

Bob's eyes look at me, all that innocence no longer exists, they look at me and I realize that I've wasted my words. He doesn't understand me.

I begin to push him toward the door so that he'll go. At first he resists slightly, but then I feel him letting himself be led out, I also feel the softness of the suede jacket under the palms of my hands. When he's already in the hall, I remember.

"Wait," I say.

I go back in, on all fours I begin to go through the things underneath the bed. I find the wallet, I take it to him, I give it to him.

He looks at me and shakes his head.

"*Ai dontanderstan*," he murmurs.

Then he goes, I see him round the corner, I hear his footsteps on the stairs. Fortunately there's no desk clerk in this hotel, no one saw him come in, no one will see him leave.

I enter the room again. Mario's eyes are open. I shove him with my foot.

"What did you expect! You couldn't do that to him. . . ."

I lie down. Bob must be in the street now. In half an hour he'll be at the hotel. Then I'll call the police. Nothing else to do. Everyone knows that Mario and I have lived here for more than two years. They took us to jail together four times, they always let us go right away, but they're not stupid. No point in trying to take off or in trying to say that you don't know anything. What for, they'll get the truth out of you some way and at some point I might get Bob involved and I don't want to do that, it would be best for me to say right off that I did it because of money and *chau*. Bob, bobo, bobito. I wonder what you're thinking. I wonder if at some moment you saw yourself in my body with your blue eyes like I saw myself in your body with my brown eyes; I wonder if once (before, long before you knew it) you were in this room, the way I, today, in front of the mirror, was in your room that I've never known. Your large, bright, sunny room. I wonder why such strange things happen. I yawn. I even think I'll sleep a while. Know something, Bob? It won't matter to me too much if they lock me up for five, ten or fifteen years if you are free, if some other time, even if only once, even if it's only for a minute, I can feel without seeing you or touching you that we are the same even though we're so different so other so far away. □

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4

"What do you think life will be like a hundred years from now?"

"Unfortunately, everything will be mechanized. People won't have time to think anymore. There will always be some maladjusted people, people who will be perfectly aware of the problem that man no longer exists, that he has become a machine."

—Answer of a twenty-two year old student to the survey entitled "Dans cent ans ils . . .", conducted by Vassilis Alexakis in the streets of Paris and published in *Constellation*, No. 263, March, 1970.

In which Juan Eduardo Martini (student, twenty-five, bachelor, "absolutely normal" according to his neighbors' statements) discovers the mute, violent conspiracy of objects against him and decides to free himself.

The telephone rang once, twice, three times. I picked up the receiver and stood there, looking at it. Hello, hello, are you there, said a voice from the other end. Then a click. I looked at the black telephone. There are white telephones and red telephones and some are quite modern. But mine was black. I looked at it. I wasn't going to hang up the receiver. All of a sudden I was tired of the telephone, sick of the telephone, I'd had it with the telephone. I don't know why. Maybe because I wasn't satisfied with a voice from the other end of a line, maybe because I suddenly felt a need to see and touch that other person who had only said hello, hello, are you there. But if I answered, I'd have to settle for that voice, that voice, buzzing in my ear and getting inside me to tell me things I wouldn't understand. But there was only the voice. I got up, went to the lavatory, looked for a hammer, and hammered the phone to pieces. The black pieces lay there, little wheels, screws, things like that. To pieces. And I felt calmer, almost happy. And I sat down on the rocking chair.

I rocked a long time, looking at the black pieces of the black telephone, the little wheels and screws, those things. Rocking, rocking, rocking. Until at a certain moment I realized that I was rocking in my favorite chair. My chair was under my bottom, I made it move and the chair rocked me, rocked me, rocked me. Why was it rocking me? I looked for the saw and in half an hour I had reduced my favorite chair to some pieces which I threw into the fireplace. The fire sputtered, sparks flew up and it was happy. Like me, now that I didn't have my favorite chair, I was happy because I didn't have my favorite chair anymore.

What should I do now? What can you do on a rainy Sunday? I pulled a book at random from the bookcase and began to read. *Le conflit des interprétations*, some essay about hermeneutics by Paul Ricoeur. I always liked philosophy and this Ricoeur interested me because of his handling of the problem of double meaning resulting from contemporary discussions about structuralism and the death of the individual. For a while I was really absorbed by the thing until I read that sentence which I have memorized: *La lecture de Freud est en même temps la crise de la philosophie du sujet tel qu'il s'apparait d'abord à lui même à titre de conscience; elle fait de la conscience, non une donnée, mais un problème et une tâche. Le "Cogito" veritable doit être conquis sur tous les faux "Cogito" qui le masquent.** He was right. But precisely because he was right, why keep on reading? I threw the book in the fire, in a while the fire devoured it. It was a pretty spectacle, I looked for other books and I threw them in one by one, the fire was insanely hungry and as I burned the books I felt lighter and lighter and lighter.

Then, using the hammer again, I smashed the television set.

I thought about burning down the building, but I felt sorry for it, I'm on the sixth floor, the five floors below and the four above would burn too, it would be a catastrophe, maybe someone would die and I don't like to have people die. Even less for them to die because of me.

Then I went out to the street. I walked along, kicking all of the cars parked along the curb. I thought about what a magnificent spectacle it would be if there were huge bonfires burning up all of the hundreds of thousands of automobiles of Buenos Aires. Red, reflections of red, oranges, violent yellows, blues and purples and twisted license plates, twisted frames. But no, there were too many cars for me to handle alone, they would have devoured, smashed, squashed me.

I was alone and the objects were all-powerful. Motionless, mute, but all-powerful. I was alone and the houses were ever higher, ten floors, twenty floors, thirty floors, forty floors. Soon, on Leandro N. Alem Street, a sixty-six floor building. And later they would have a hundred floors, a thousand floors, ten thousand floors. I don't know why, but I began to take off my clothes, even though it was cold. First my raincoat, then my jacket, then my sweater, then my shirt, then my shoes, then my pants. I kept on walking as I did it. At first they didn't pay much attention, later they paid quite a bit, when I was completely naked, a lot of people crowded around me, some were laughing, others looked serious, a woman broke into hysterical laughter, pointing at my groin and the area around it; another woman said something like "filthy exhibitionist," finally a policeman covered me with his coat and took me to the station. I felt bad about not feeling the cool raindrops on my skin anymore.

Now I am in Vieytes. Whenever I can, I strip, but they don't let me, they forcibly dress me. I tell them I'm all right, that I feel fine; the doctor is surprised because I can engage in rational conversations, speak coherently about politics, movies, soccer. What he doesn't understand is

*The reading of Freud is at the same time the crisis of the philosophy of the individual in the way that he initially perceives himself by virtue of his consciousness; it makes of consciousness not a fact, but a problem and a task. The true 'cogito' should be conquered beneath all the false 'cogitos' which mask it.

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that I don't want to have anything to do with things, and he doesn't understand my insisting on eating with my hands, sleeping on the floor and if possible in the open air and with nothing at all over me, breaking all the objects they leave within my reach, those symbols of utility which because of their utility have made me so useless. I try to explain that things which are good for something are not good for anything, but it is then that they shake their heads, the doctors and the nurses, and they pat me on the back and say "calm down, my friend." □

MARCIA SOUTHWICK

A SONG OF DROWNING

I know my body from water,
I know my hands from shells,
I know my eyes from fish eyes
and my skin from moss.
I know this water isn't a window
I can open.

*

The wind is no help.
It parts the hair,
it divides the grass,
it ruffles the fur
on the back of a weasel,

it divides everything I say
into three parts water
and one part earth.

Water turns wood to stone;
it turns the drowned to stone.
Water can fossilize a drowned woman's dress,
and the dress is heavy with embroidery,
and now the embroidery is hard as cartilage.

*

The dead can dig without arms.
They go deeper
until they gather
by an underground stream
and tell stories.

There is no sky left
in their skulls,
though there is rain

and whole palaces
in ruins
in which women are carrying
bouquets of flowers,

and people celebrate
by piling the flowers
in a deserted ballroom
on a marble floor so shiny
the petals
are multiplied,

and they burn the flowers
and dance
in and out of the smoke,
singing . . .

These are the songs
I remember as I drown—

I am singing to scare you off.
This water is mine.

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KENNETH LASH & DAVID WHITSETT

WORK

A Short and Critical History

In the beginning is the job. Manhood (becoming personhood) begins with it. Acceptance into the councils of society depends upon our contribution of work, so most of us assume our role. Act I. The rest of the play—our work-life story—is shaped by such elements as the kind of job we have, the results both real and imagined of our work, and of increasing importance lately our feelings about our work. For the unemployed there is only the one awful problem. The employed might be said to have problems, rather than a problem. These problems are more or less profound, more or less traditional, more or less puzzling components of post-industrial work life, but their sum is proving large enough to pose us serious national problems of health—psychological health, spiritual health.

Until recent years our attention has gone largely to the physical problems of the worker, on and off the job. We eradicated slavery and child labor and sweatshops, attempted with good success to decrease the physical dehumanization of certain forms of labor, and went on from there to lift material rewards—off-the-job conditions—to a level so comparatively high that it was not merely unequalled in history but in itself *made* history. We tacked education on to it, tucked it all inside our democracy, and produced the most physically liberated and mentally free worker in the world. And he calls in sick. He tells you in a bar that his work doesn't seem to mean anything.

If work is mainly what we do and are (we tend in part to become what we do), then if our work is not meaningful our life is not meaningful. Simple enough. But who decides whether my work is or is not meaningful? I do. I'm the Supreme Court on that question, and in many instances will not sit in judgment unless the question is brought before me. Whether it is, when it is, what arguments are presented pro and con largely depend on external (social) circumstance. I won't ordinarily push the matter myself because ordinarily I don't expect all that much out of work. The ancient wisdom dictates that work is hell, time off is blessed relief. So it has been for millenia and still is for most people on earth. A wealth of effort; a poverty of result. But in the United States in the 1970s? The majority of the world's workers might well see our situation as a poverty of effort followed by a wealth of result. Our developing problem lies in the character of that result.

Result is the key concept when we're looking into matters of work. But it is a multiform, various, shifting kind of concept, and wants a sharp eye kept on it. An example of essential difficulty in appraising work results is our habit of accepting the convenience of rulers, which historically emphasizes as result the goods and services produced, with only sporadic or self-serving thought given to the effects of that producing on the worker. Yet both are work results. Indeed, a shifting of that emphasis may be just what's going on, or preparing to go on.

Originally these two results of work were not separable. I hunted and I made for the need of food and shelter. Judgment of success, of well-being, was simple: I ate or didn't, I was warm or wasn't. On the basic level that's still how it is, but things have been added. To the original hunter-worker the human added—evolved—the domesticating, the harvesting worker . . . and changed the situation mightily. Possibly to his own surprise there eventually appeared in his life the magical reality of surplus, of more than enough for today so that something of it might be stored up against tomorrow. Now "results" had also to be judged in terms of their producing or not producing surplus. Complex trading-off of this against that; considerable trafficking between today and tomorrow. Then, because it made clear sense in the non-icebox age, came the bartering rather than storing of surplus; and in its wake as stable societies developed came the bartering of surplus for promises rather than goods, i.e., *money*, the greater magic. (And eventually *time*, a new complexity.) So now work-results include not only the concreteness of the thing produced for today, but the more abstract concept of the thing produced for tomorrow, and the yet more abstract concept—the most marvelous of complexities—the thing produced for who-knows-when, i.e., "money."

In history the latest in a series of results dominates. So "money" came to dominate a work situation that nonetheless contains other factors. In post-medieval societies this domination swelled to such size as to protect it from questioning, and so in time came to be perceived as a norm. The abstraction taken for the reality, like frozen fish sticks. And so we arrived at a fact of life that in reality may or may not be a fact of life, at a truth that is somehow crooked, that is both true and not true: *the best measure of work result is money* (meaning capital produced by and accruing to the society and the worker).

And since in our technologically compartmented society most jobs pay characteristic wages, the crooked truth produced a crooked corollary: *the best social measure of a worker is his/her job.*

We're all familiar with this mode of measurement. Someone sits down next to us in an airplane: "Where do you come from?" they ask. The impersonal question. Friendly. Maybe we have mutual acquaintances. Then the next question: "What do you do?" The personal question. They're zeroing in. As soon as we reply to it, a

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complex series of judgments will be made in a microsecond. "Important, not; my peer group, not; worth serious conversation, not. . . ." These judgments are followed by delicate probings to insure that our reply of "maintenance engineer" does not in fact signify janitor, that we are what we have said we are. But what we have said we are is a job.

Put that way it seems shocking, but the greater shock lies in the truth of it, in the accuracy with which our jobs can tell so much about us, about our lives and the lives of those close to us. *Work in America,* the 1973 report of a special task force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, spells it out:

> In industrial America, the father's occupation has been the major determinant of status, which in turn has determined the family's class standing, where they lived, where the children went to school, and with whom the family associated—in short the lifestyle and life chances of all the family members. (*Work in America*, p. 4)

"Lifestyle and life chances": well, my God, that's the whole bag. All that out of my job? Talk about work results! Isn't that too damned much work results?

The answer we are generally given is that jobs may determine, but individuals may determine their jobs. That's a cornerstone of democracy—equality of opportunity. Thus in the history of work we arrive at a new place: In the beginning is no longer the job but the job opportunity.

Presumably this structuring is to militate against accidents of birth, against unearned advantage and undeserved disadvantage in their various historic forms. Events have shown us some efficacy in this proposition. They have also demonstrated in some cases resistance to it; in others they show us with compelling drama the problems of choice, the obligations of opportunity.

We are offered social mobility, the opportunity *to become*. To become what? Something "better," someone moving toward a "higher" lifestyle. These vague terms do not, curiously, appear to be vague to the general worker. The hierarchical values established in our democracy seem clear and unambiguous. So presumably I know the desired direction, I see the opportunity. Suppose I don't take advantage of that opportunity? Suppose I'm of a color, sex, or race that makes the opportunity more theoretical than real, or suppose I have limited abilities, am born in the wrong place at the wrong time, have a differing set of desires—suppose any number of combinations and permutations of accident, of "life chances" seen one way as against "life chances" seen another? Will I be excused? No. Why do I need to be excused, working at making bicycle spokes? Well, because I haven't advanced to the rims, the handlebars, the seats.

Curious, isn't it? I am both allowed to choose and told what choice to make. My lifestyle and chances may indeed be determined by what I do, but my "final" status—the level of esteem in which I am held—is also defined by what I *don't* do, by job levels I have not reached, whether because I couldn't ("that's the way it goes") or wouldn't ("something wrong with that guy"). Thus, "the obligations" of opportunity.

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So: a problem of industrial democracy, of worklife (hence "social") mobility, is the price exacted for being non-mobile, for not making it in a society which offers everybody the chance—read "choice"—to make it. The problem is of course both psychological and sociological: I must live with my own, inner evaluation of my achievement—an evaluation subject to constant change as "opportunity" comes and goes, advances and recedes; I must also deal with external evaluation, the ever-present "typing" by caste.

Nowhere on record is there a classless society, and our democracy does not pretend to be one. It simply maintains that our castes are open to new membership regardless of race, etc., that our class is not inevitably fixed by birth. Wherever in history class is not in fact determined by birth it will be determined by function (job). Functions in their turn will be "classed" by tradition (status) and/or value of contribution (result). The more differentiated functions there are, the more clearly defined and specialized the tasks are in a given society, the greater is the potential for class distinctions both by occupation and within occupation. Thus a modern industrial society is less intensely but more variously productive of class distinctions than any simple old kingdom. Far from being a classless society, America may have more and finer distinctions of class than any society in history. We are, after all, highly evolved?

> A large public utility company has a manual approximately two inches thick devoted to describing the perquisites that go with each of its many levels of management positions. The fineness with which these distinctions of class are drawn is unconsciously self-satirizing. For example, for each management level the manual prescribes the following: square feet of office space, square feet of carpeting (not necessarily equivalent to space since some levels are not entitled to wall-to-wall carpeting), number of windows, size of desk, material from which the desk is constructed, type of desk chair, size, number and construction of extra chairs or (at the higher levels) couches and other pieces of furniture such as tables and credenzas. In addition, managers are permitted to select a specified number of lamps, pieces of artwork, and ashtrays from "groups" which are kept in lockers and assigned to each level of the organization.
>
> The result is that an observer can tell exactly where any executive stands in the class structure. This, of course, is the *intended* result, since it is considered important in this organization that one behave in the expected ways towards each level of management. Some must be addressed formally, some by first name; some may be disagreed with, others not. Indeed, for some we rise when they enter the room, for others we are expected either to leave or to become as near as possible to invisible. It is the French court revived, in mufti.

We are obsessed by status in America, both because there is so much of it, and because in our motivational scheme we make so many of its signs, symbols and perquisites available for purchase. Purchase by money, yes, but more significantly by choice. Job choice. In our society even preparing for the choice (often called "college")—or being prepared to be chosen—is fateful. It represents your own and your allies' decision about your "reach" in life. Once made, a series of choices is initiated which never ends, which cannot end in one's mind or hopes even if it does in the actualities of work life. The struggle to improve status would seem to be modeled after the struggle to achieve heaven: there's always more to be

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done, and only death can end it. It is this treadmilling image which so many contemporary kids attack their worker-parent with. To them, he appears stuck. Unless basics change, these kids will live to discover for themselves that he was stuck inside the problem of opportunity. Democracy's gift.

And it *is* a gift, quite a marvelous one, considering the long centuries of mass serfdom. But as our oldest tales tell us, the more marvelous the proffered gift the more dangerous is the unthinking acceptance of it.

From the time of its earliest appearance in human consciousness the matter of choice has endlessly fascinated us. Seemingly an essence at the very center of our humanity, our "difference," it is notoriously unstable, both real and unreal, great and small, present and absent.

"The 'real me' is engaged not in producing services or making goods but in making 'money.' "

Infuriating. To have absolute choice is to be a god; to have none is to be a thing. Puffing helplessly back and forth between the extremes, we naturally evolve an ambivalent attitude toward the matter of choice; philosophically we argue that we have it or don't; in daily life we scramble for it on Monday, wash our hands of it on Tuesday. It is probable that those with a high intensity of belief in choice are the successful few: things have worked out well for them, they'd like the credit (and may deserve it). For most, things have worked out just so-so: will they claim the discredit? Why should they when there's plenty of evidence for the overwhelming powers of genetics, class, schooling, family, society? Determinism of whatever type may be at the same time philosophically disturbing and psychologically comforting. The most momentous declaration of independence may be "It ain't *my* fault!"

That means the choice was not mine, and so I am not responsible for the result. In this way a lot of people, a lot of workers, "give back" the supposed gift of choice. They don't want it, or don't believe it. It suits them not to believe it, or they are substantially correct in believing that choice may exist for some people but not for them. We know such people, we know such groups. We can't accept them. In a society motivated by choice, their presence is a social disease. And so we are attempting in a confused but right-minded way to legislate the element of choice into their lives. We use a psychologically-colored phrase: affirmative action. Or medically-oriented phrasing: job rehabilitation. But the results are predictably erratic:

> In a small town in New York state there is a marketing organization run by a man who has genuine concern for the people who work for him. He is convinced that they need to "grow" and that the work he provides should be a vehicle for that growth. He hired a consultant to help him enrich his people's jobs, to offer them opportunities for thought and decision making. The consultant wisely suggested interviewing some of the people first to see if they wanted enriched jobs. The employees, it turned out, had no interest in making more decisions. They were almost all mature female residents of the local community who worked because they found it a convenient way to get out of the house. "Coming over here, opening envelopes and talking with friends is a lot better than sitting at home trying to figure out why my daughter takes drugs," said one. Another said, "I come here to *stop* thinking, so don't complicate my life, O.K.?"

These workers are simply offering overt evidence of a covert stream that flows through our society. Deep down, many of us do not want too much choice. It puzzles, it bothers, it doesn't let things alone. Worse, it exposes us to being seen wrong, dumb, whatever—all the bare-knuckled words.

The acceptance or rejection of choice involves the profound matter of maturity. Limiting ourselves to the area of "work," we find immaturity typically claiming its high price. Wherever he abjures choice (or is denied it) the worker does something more serious than express an indulgent pessimism: he distances himself from his society. And to that extent subtracts from the relevance of his work, renders it less meaningful to *himself*. At this point quantity of effort and quality of result must head downward.

Conversely: the more I am in fact tossed on the waters like a cork because I do not or cannot choose, the more apt I am to hide that fact—indeed, to project myself in public as captain of my soul. Therefore, if the job is where I feel weak and/or ineffectual, I will dissociate myself from the job. The guy or gal on the job is not the real me. Some of the manifestations of psychological denial are funny in their absurdity. A *New Yorker* cartoon of some years ago showed on the left side the young upwardly mobile man in his trim three-button suit home from work, ascending the stairs of his Greenwich Village brownstone. The right side showed him descending those stairs in rumpled hair, jeans and sneakers, the password paperback under his arm, a happy Mr. Hyde.

More current scenarios of the split between the contemporary worker and job, the inability or flat refusal to be identified with what I do, are equally Theater of the Absurd. Let's go back to that plane. Suppose the respondent to the question, "What do you do?" is a Willy Loman of the 1970s: "I sell costume jewelry. Silly thing for a grown man to do, isn't it?"

But lest you think he's a dying salesman he finds opportunities to inform you that he has a boat, his wife works in real estate, they're buying a condominium in Colorado, their son is in social work. In short, "I may be a salesman but that's not who I am."

The "real me" is engaged not in producing services or making goods but in making "money." After all, if my social responsibility is to have, then my real work is to get. The particular job (means) doesn't signify much. I will choose my work not because I especially like it, have the vocation, but because it offers the quickest, surest path to "getting." Or I train, am schooled, not in the food business but in "management." So I manage cars or corn flakes, depending upon chance. Thus my job choice at any level reflects the abstract more than the concrete, disengagement from product (result) rather than commitment. And so it must, since I am now becoming no less than my boss a cool-eyed buck-hunter. Where he may be ruthless I may be careless. I will use analagous means toward the same end—"success." *But*: success still measured by only one of the two work results, i.e., the thing produced (money), without measuring the coexisting result—the effects upon the producer. Thus the worker,

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whether led into it or leading, joins the employer in sweeping under the rug the psychological pollutants.

But they won't stay there. (That's a problem with pollutants.) The reasons seem clear: if what I do is simply the instrumentality of what I have, then the burden of proof—the "meaning of it all"—shifts to my possessions. The story of my life is filmed as an accumulating crusade. Others may enjoy it, I may feel heroic watching it, but I know what's left out: security that is not social but psychological. Secured satisfaction, the kind that sticks to a person's soul. The boat and the cabin on the lake are fine, but only so long as they aren't required to represent basic reality. They are "surplus." They can't be made to stand for the meaning of my life. Nor can they be made to provide security for my family. On the contrary, increments of goods and time seem to contribute toward *insecurity* in my family. My wife, with "time on her hands," is restless, dissatisfied. My daughter goes to college, gobbles birth control pills, tells me I'm stupid about women. My younger son works in a factory, changes into leather clothes after work, fills his pockets with marijuana, gets on his motorcycle and off he goes who knows where to do who knows what. The proletarian jet-set. My elder son is a serious fellow, works at City Hall, wears those pinched Johnny Carson suits. He's no trouble, but he doesn't look like anybody I know. He looks like a newspaper ad.

Aspects of that scenario exist in almost every family. Contemporary work-life is usually contributive to it, but is only one of a number of causal agents. The point here is that if my work result is money, and if the uses of money are severely limited in terms of providing meaning, satisfaction, identity, then clearly such work result is insufficient. This insufficiency must be made up, for the sake of my self-esteem.

Several possibilities present themselves. The least sane is revenge. Industrial sabotage. This is a spreading phenomenon sometimes open, sometimes partially hidden (our persistent problem with absenteeism and with quality control). Sometimes it is conscious, sometimes subconscious (e.g., the wildcat strike which seems insufficiently motivated, and/or goes on even after the specified "complaint" has been accepted and remedied).

Sometimes it takes the form of employee theft from the company. (A midwest equipment manufacturer recently discovered a group of employees using company time and materials to make metal hashish pipes which they were selling on the street.) Other times it shows up as overt destruction, as at the General Motors plant at Lordstown, Ohio, where "quality" problems show up as smashed headlights, broken mirrors, slashed seats.

"We . . . produced the most physically liberated and mentally free worker in the world. And he calls in sick."

Another possibility—related to revenge in its effect but motivated by clear-eyed assessment—is the acceptance by the worker of the indignity or meaninglessness of his job, which he then distances himself from by ceasing to care, by withdrawing his job from those activities by which he judges himself in terms of performance. He may not even care whether or not he is careless. Work that encourages no thought, gets none. Or as Abraham Maslow put it, "What is not worth doing is not worth doing well."

Both the above possibilities are negativistic. Revenge may be sweet, but it gives you psychological cavities. Doing shoddy work may on one level be sensible and therefore good for your intellectual self-esteem, but it doesn't make you feel good. Doing shoddy work is not the way most humans would choose to live.

Many workers have found a source of pride and satisfaction in unionism, the most important form of political activity to develop in the industrial world. Semi-peaceful, it is nonetheless a revolutionary force and has already produced revolutionary effects, with yet more profound effects gathering on the horizon. Originally unionism had to do specifically with "money," with the worker fighting to keep a larger share of the first of the two "work results," i.e., goods produced. This function of unionism is basic, primitive, unlikely to fade from the forefront. But it is already being modified to an extent by the increasing attention given to the second "work result"—the effects of producing goods on the producer. Or, simply, the effects of my work situation and work activity on me.

Clearly this is a step forward into considerable complexities. Where, for example, the attention limits itself largely to "wages," it is trading off-the-job satisfactions for on-the-job dissatisfactions. It says that each of us will fashion (buy?) the good life, and that we will do so away from work. Thus it leaves relatively untouched the old concept that work is hell. And that salvation lies between us and our gods (goods?). If as seems increasingly evident the worker is moving toward seeing that trade-off as undesirable and unnecessary, the rules of the game are in for radical change. For example, what happens when the light focused on "job dissatisfactions" is increased in intensity?

What becomes evident at once is that traditional concepts of job-dissatisfaction are simplistic, that as Frederick Herzberg and others have pointed out the essence of the problem lies in job *content*, not in surroundings and superficies. The worker wants and demands better safety measures, cleaner washrooms, more coffee breaks, benefits of this that and the other kind, gets them . . . and remains dissatisfied. (And with his hostility undiminished, despite all you've "done for him.") The trouble is that everything has been taken care of except the centrality of the problem—the nature of the work itself, what the job includes and what it does not include.

In the interests and necessities of mass production, vital *human* elements were abstracted from work. Such elements as variety; opportunity to make decisions (fail or succeed); satisfaction of seeing a "wholeness" of result; sense of individual dignity in the act of work, social purpose in the result. These seem to be more than bookish phrases; they seem to describe necessary elements required in some form by every human being. Without these we suffer an analog to poor diet, what might be called psychological malnutrition. Hence the term job-enrichment, and hence the relatively "simple" means by which a measure of health can be restored.

> In an insurance company the jobs of the clerks who approve health insurance claims were 'enriched' when instead of getting isolated work-pieces they were each assigned their

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own field claims office to serve, and given an opportunity to decide some of their own priorities and work methods. Each clerk was permitted to handle all claims emanating from his or her customer offices, regardless of complexity or amount of money involved (some training was necessary), and to check their own work rather than passing it along to others for review. Taken together these changes offered each worker an integrated piece of work, an opportunity to manage that piece of work, and the feedback necessary to manage it effectively. Results showed that customers received better, faster claims service and that the clerks liked their jobs better.

On the other hand work reforms that would on the face of it seem highly desirable sometimes fail because the workers do not, after all, really want them. Concentrated as their view is on the sins of management, they may overlook the sins committed themselves upon themselves, the willingness to be exploited in exchange for "goods." Deadening various sensibilities to withstand the necessities of their work, they have become habituated to their state—have in fact changed themselves to suit their jobs, and do not want to change back:

> An attempt to enrich the jobs of workers in a paper mill in the northeast was met first with suspicion and then with open hostility on the part of the workers involved. It had been suggested by management that both the workers and the company might benefit by forming autonomous work groups with opportunities to learn new assignments and plan their own work. The workers listened to the plan, huddled in meetings and in bars for a few days, and announced that if management wanted more work they should just say so and not give it fancy names. More money would get more work, they said, just as it always had.

Nonetheless, in one form or another, whether the emphasis is on quality or quantity, experiments in the reorganization of work go on. Despite all that has come to him in terms of money and leisure, the job stays at the center of the worker's life. A growing awareness of what is lacking at that center, of what has been taken out of it and thus taken away from him, is bringing back the magic word of labor militancy—"exploitation." It returns as psychological exploitation, but the particular fuel doesn't greatly signify—militancy is always the same kind of flame. Only the degree matters. A significant number of companies throughout the world are aware of this, and have begun experiments aimed at heading off or at least containing the intensities. They are trying out a variety of means and approaches aimed at changing the substantive reality of the work situation.

These experiments, taking place simultaneously and at so many different locations around the world, make it no overstatement to suggest that the word "revolution" is accurate terminology for describing this flow of event. One may certainly see these manifestations as aspects of a post-industrial movement that is in fact revolutionary. In totalitarian states the revolution is violently "over." In others, as occasionally happens in enlightened history, attempts are being made to offer the concessions a few historical moments before they would be forcibly taken. The specific concession, common to all the major attempts, is to give the contemporary worker a greater share in management (as his father was given a greater share in profits). The bottomline meaning of this has to do less with industry *per se* than with politics, i.e., the perception of the worker as a *thinking* equal. Only this can cap the "century of the common man." It goes down hard with management, and is more often force-fed than willingly tasted, but it's happening all over the world, from western suburbia to Africa:

> A great deal of activity is taking place in Scandinavia. Companies such as Shell, Phillips, NorskHydro, Volvo and Saab, as well as less well-known organizations such as Kockums Steel, Husqvarna and Hallstavik Paper have all been involved in experiments concerning the redesign of work.
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> Volvo's auto assembly plant at Kalmar is, beyond any doubt, the innovation in Swedish industry that has attracted the most attention both within Sweden itself and internationally. It is a completely new factory and it incorporates an entirely new concept of assembling an automobile. It is the first such plant in the world to be designed without a fixed speed assembly line. (A very similar system has since been established at the SaabScania engine plant at Sudertaljie.) In the Kalmar plant, Volvo has made a major effort to adapt technology to human beings rather than subordinating people to the dictates of the assembly line. Even the shape of the building is different. It is an irregularly shaped structure consisting of seven hexagons built on two levels. This shape resulted from a desire to avoid the usual vast sea of work stations that are typical of such plants. In every corner of this many cornered factory there are small shops (about twenty in total) that are staffed by groups or teams of employees. Each group has its own entrance, dressing room, coffee break room and easy chairs. There are large windows which provide a view of the outdoors and a noise level which is much lower than that of most manufacturing situations.
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> However, the physical environment and facilities provided are not the major issue here. The more important technological advance, the one which permits the rather remarkable changes in job content, is a replacement for the conventional overhead conveyor which appears in all other automobile plants. To replace this conveyor, Volvo developed two forms of "wagons," which are battery operated and computer guided and move silently about the factory carrying both body and engine assemblies to prearranged points in the plant. The various work groups organize their own patterns. Each is responsible for a more or less homogeneous collection of tasks (e.g., the electrical system). This division of work creates completely new opportunities for concentrating on quality and for decentralizing the responsibility for the quality. In addition, there is a highly developed and sophisticated data system which continuously provides information to the members of the group on how their part of the car makes out at subsequent quality checkpoints.

"A problem of industrial democracy . . . is the price exacted for not making it in a society which offers everybody the chance to make it."

> IBM in Amsterdam, Olivetti in Italy, have had notably good results with "humanizing" work by restructuring jobs, upgrading functions. Projects such as these are not limited to the highly industrialized nations. The United Africa Company, a distributor in Ghana for Caterpillar Tractor, has been involved for a substantial period of time in developing newly designed and more challenging jobs as well as in the training of people to fulfill such positions. A South African subsidiary of Bruynzeel Plywood Limited has been experimenting with job design in the Northern Transvaal.
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> In Yugoslavia we find an attempt at a total consolidation of

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worker and management. From our point of view it may seem the polar extremity of socialism; from their point of view it may be offered as the only way to "save" freely operating enterprise within a looming context of political authoritarianism. Yugoslav businesses operate on a "works council" system. In companies of sixty employees or less all employees are members of the works council. In larger organizations elected worker representatives make up the council. All decisions concerning the operation of the company are made by these works councils. For example, the council chooses and hires managers and executives, sets salaries, disciplines

"The struggle to improve status would seem to be modeled after the struggle to achieve heaven. . . ."

and fires (if necessary) workers and managers alike, establishes and administers capital investment programs, and decides on product line additions or deletions. From an economic point of view the system so far appears neither superior nor inferior to others. It does, however, constitute a major experiment in alternative management systems.

England, struggling in extremities which can be viewed in part as brought on by a long repressed, too suddenly released orgy of revenge by its "working classes" has been the site of numerous experiments in the implementation of "socio-technical systems." This is an approach to work design which grows out of the theories of members of the Tavistock Institute in London. At its best, this approach is used to design plants and the jobs in them *before* they are built. The attempt is to build an integrated manufacturing system in which the technology enhances rather than inhibits the formation of strong, supportive group interaction.

This work with socio-technical systems is the newest of new directions. For some it must appear intelligent, very promising. For others, who have watched social planners plan a tiger and produce an aardvark, it will bring a sigh, a shake of a saddened head. Probably its major significance for the history of work lies less in its results than in its underlying concept: that society must learn how to exist for the sake of its workers, as against our past history in which most workers existed for the sake of society. That may be a Marxian concept, but the history of work need not therefore follow a Marxian solution. On the contrary, that "solution" has produced some very unhappy results for the worker it would "free." To a much greater extent than modern capitalism it ignores the effects of the production system upon the producer. Herein lies its total authoritarianism, an authoritarianism which is a true recidivism, a falling back into the worker's past rather than movement toward his now possible future.

A confluence of present, past, and future in the work situation was discovered and documented in a 1976 segment of the television program, "60 Minutes." The location is Michigan City, Indiana, at a non-union plant named Sullair, which manufactures air compressors. This individually owned and organized avant-garde manufacturing facility shows a fascinating mix of ingredients: no foremen, no executive parking, no time clocks, complete-unit work design, the workers themselves as quality-control judges, wage differentials based primarily on worker versatility (ability to perform a number of differing tasks "on the floor"); swimming pool, squash and tennis courts (indoor and out; free lessons) for workers *and* their families right there at the plant; a worker cafeteria designed like a French cafe and featuring for example a lunch of salad, hot roast beef and baked potato, desserts and beverages for 80 cents; vending machines for soft drinks, candy, etc., at 5¢ a pull; free dental care. . . . Some afternoons a bell rings and the only boss, the plant owner, is out there with free beer for everybody. It seems like a pastel Disneyplant, or your kindly old grandfather putting together a "nice" work situation for you and your wife and children. But, as the owner freely points out, "It isn't what you pay or give the worker that counts (determines profit), but what he produces." So the plant is prospering, is beating out its neighboring competition.

But wait. Disney is "true" only so long as the movie situation "ends." In history nothing ends. So: a number of Sullair workers recently invited the Teamsters (the mechanized Dragosaur) in to try to unionize the plant. Why?

"The most momentous declaration of independence may be 'It ain't *my* fault!' "

Because the pay-scale at Sullair is lower than that of some comparable facilities. An older worker tells the sound camera that he worked for a lot of years punching a time clock in a tough assembly-line plant and he never wants to go back to it, he's more content here than he ever thought he could be in "work," that he's willing to "pay" a hundred dollars a week (in lesser wages) if that's what it takes to stay at Sullair under present conditions. A young worker says it's really OK here in a lot of ways but it's not what I want to do all my life and the pay could be better. . . .

A portion of history is being shown: the evolution of expectation, changing levels of involvement, mutations in the commitment of older versus younger workers. Perhaps we glimpse industrial history "catching up" to worker changes either too late or too simplistically. Perhaps we hear a whispered suggestion that industrial work situations cannot *in reality* "satisfy" the contemporary worker no matter what, that they can only satisfy the older generation for whom they represent a qualitative jump, but not the younger who in their minds have made a demand-leap even before they enter the work force. The simplest way to characterize that leap is to posit the archetypal situation in which nobody wants to be a private in the work army. Or conversely, everybody wants to be "middle class." Not just economically, as Robert Heilbroner has pointed out, but psychologically.

Further psychological factors—governing ones—are illustrated here. The obvious one is the familiar pattern experienced by all of us: no matter what the particular

"We are obsessed by status in America, both because there is so much of it, and because . . . we make so many of its signs, symbols and perquisites available for purchase."

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"advance" or improvement in our lives, we quickly adapt, become "used to it." The improvement "de-intensifies" so gradually and inevitably that even we are surprised one day to find that it is now taken for granted. At this point its power as stimulus has evaporated. (This is the origin of "What have you done for me lately?") Further, the ancient and honorable theory of "both" is being illustrated. (Which do you want, money or looks?). Pleasant, interesting, honorable working conditions are provided. Fine. My neighbor doesn't have that. I've got that over him. But he's making fifty a week more. He's got that over me. So how have I advanced in status? I need *both*. Call in the Teamsters. Will they let him have both? Will the plant be able or willing to support both? Someone tells him yes, he wants to believe yes.

Is yes a possible answer? Can a profit-fueled economy afford the unrelenting dollar demands of a steadily more powerful work force? Can a "free" economic system in which authority is distributed from the top down withstand the steadily increasing pressure for dilution of authority at the top, redistribution of decision-making powers to the bottom? And what are the historic implications of that Alice in Wonderland aspect of the current scene which shows us union pension funds owning a potential controlling interest in many of the corporations their members work for . . . and take adversarial positions against?

Through the intermediation of their pension funds the workers may soon be in the position of owning the plant they are going out on strike against. Will this stop them? Not likely, for the reason that strike demands are, as we have seen, much more complex than they once were. They include the vital economic element of money, but have moved from simple "increase" toward substantial profit sharing. They include also political and social elements, demands for a change in status, life style, economic *role*.

The old and the new coexist in the current situation. It is certainly feasible, for example, to see the worker's constant demands for increased wages and benefits as purely economic. It is also feasible to interpret these demands at least in part as a form of extortion by the worker for the pain endured in a life of footbound work ("effects on me"). The burgeoning trend toward the abbreviated work day, week, year (v. 1976 Ford Motor-UAW settlement), may indeed be motivated in part by an effort to reduce employment by sharing-out available work-hours; it may also be motivated by a combination of desire for increased time off, decreased effects of my work on my life.

After providing sufficient employment for all who want it, *worker satisfaction* is the next necessity. It is by weight of numbers the necessity which is coming to shape the day, and short of authoritarian interference will surely do so. The late twentieth century shows collectivism and its consequent egalitarian emphasis as the dominating politico-social force. The particular form that this will take in our U.S. society, already only demi-capitalist, may be largely influenced by the responses we make to the demands for worker satisfaction, by the insight and ingenuity we bring to the problem of reinstituting work itself as the logical source for worker satisfaction. Ultimately this is the only vital source—all the rest shows itself historically as a pendulum swing between force and bribery. □

PATRICIA GOEDICKE

AT THE DENTIST'S

Losing the first pawn is easy
But as to the third, or the fourth . . .

Years later, at the dentist's
The whole chess board tips, jerks
Tilts, as on an airplane,

The tree of your head snaps,
Branches break in two,

Huge boulders shudder and then lurch,
Blood seeps to the surface . . .

The taste of it all night.

In the soft, slimy hollows
Tongue probes like a dog
Prowling the streets of the mind.

Where to? What move next?
Tipped upside down like rusty pails

So dead men fill the skies.

Now bishops, now knights
Now kings and queens and castles litter the land.

This is one life you can't trade
Under your pillow for a wish

But the dentist smiles at you like a Mother,
Through the broken columns of your mouth

Dutifully you cry out
It's only a game, bravely
You insist upon playing another,

In the one dark corner that is left
Hunched, anonymous, hooded

Before you sits the strangely familiar opponent
Who is faceless, who has no eyes;

Though his jawbone is covered with green mold
His teeth are perfectly beautiful,

Pure, white, flashing
Filled with fool's gold.

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Jacob Landau

INFERNO

Seven Lithographs

32	The Virtuous Pagans (I IV)
33	Paolo and Francesca (II V)
34	City of Dis (VI VIII)
35	The Violent-against-Themselves (VII XIII)
36	The Violent-against-Art (VII XVII)
37	The Noble Thieves (VIII XXV)
38	The Ninth Circle (IX XXXIV)

Jacob Landau lives and works in Roosevelt, New Jersey. He is a man of stunning energies—as artist, writer, hard thinker—widely exhibited and published. His work has been shown in one-man and group shows in Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Washington, et al., since 1952, and is included in the permanent collections of such museums as the Whitney, the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Collection, and the Bibliotheque Nationale. Of his re-reading of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, prior to fulfilling a publisher's request to illustrate a new translation of the work, Landau writes:*

"I gradually came to see that for Dante, as for Blake, the road to one's own Paradise lay through one's own Inferno and Purgatory. I came to feel that the poem dealt with the drama of human growth and with the tragedy of human choosing. To exercise choice is to be free, but to choose is to bear the consequences of having chosen. And, as Dante showed, there is always the hope of transcendence.

"For those who might ask, what does all this have to do with art, I can only assert that it has everything to do with my art. I have been called a 'humanist' artist, which I take to mean commitment or intention rather than eulogy. I have always seen my art as a probe of human meanings rather than as an exploration of formal or technical possibilities. This does not imply a separation of form from content. In saying only what I felt impelled to say, I developed a form sense based on that necessity, and, consequently, on the necessary connection between form and image. On the other hand, it is modernism's pursuit of the possible which has tended to separate human from formal or structural meaning. Modernism in the technological society is the myth of mechanism, of technique, of ceaseless invention of means for the creation of new means. The art-historical version of this idea sees each artist's style as means for the creation of new style. It is a tradition in trouble, in art as in society—as the gaps between promise and performance widen, as solutions generate new problems, as entropies, anomalies, side-effects accumulate. A society which has been willing to sanction the slaughter of 75 million people in less than a century, and which prepares for even greater slaughters is a society at the edge of history. The apocalypse we face collectively begins within each of us as we undergo private apocalypses of transformation. I began to see my search, in this period, as a small part of this transformative process, and my art as the cutting edge of my search."

*From an essay appearing in *Print Review* magazine, published by Pratt Institute.

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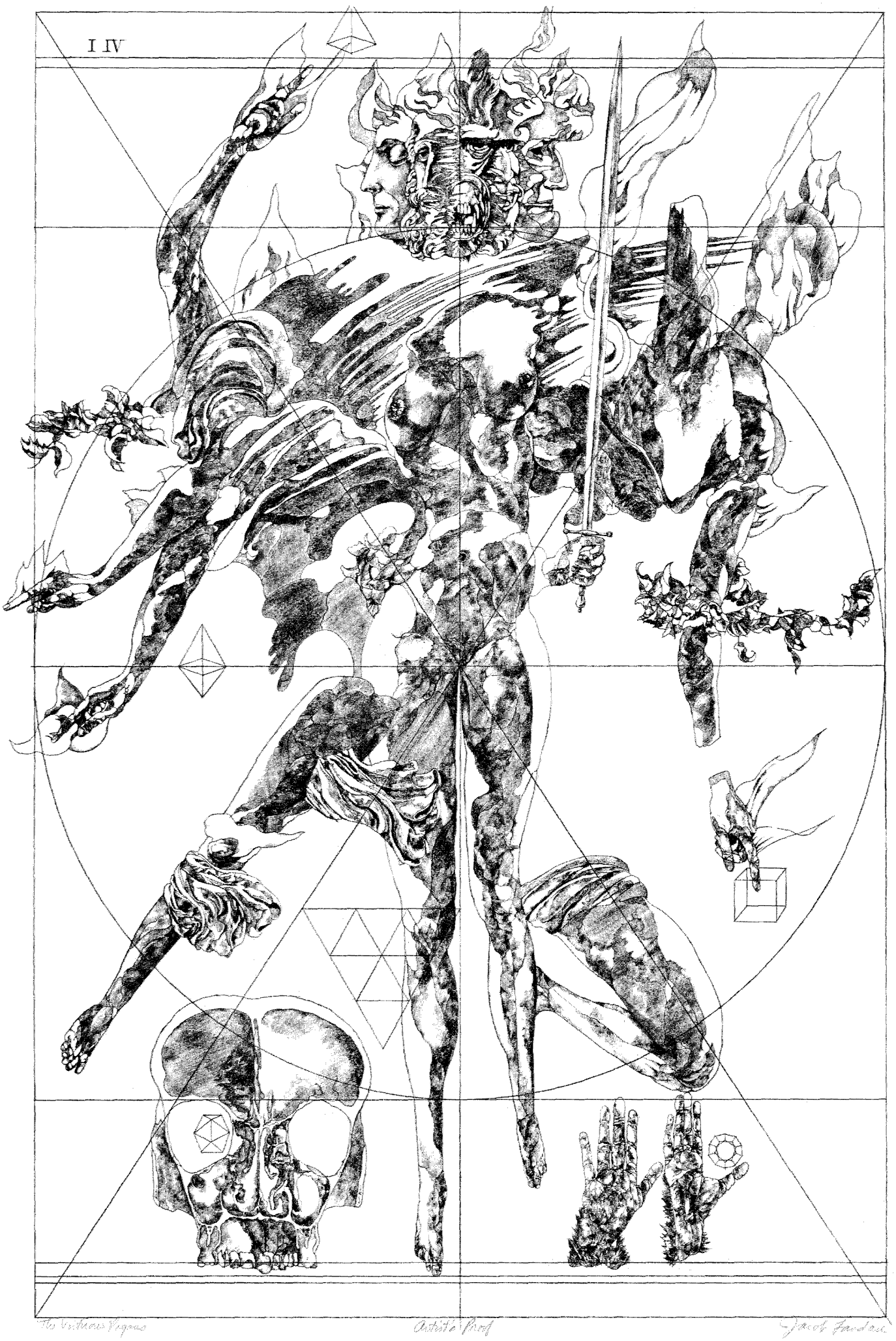

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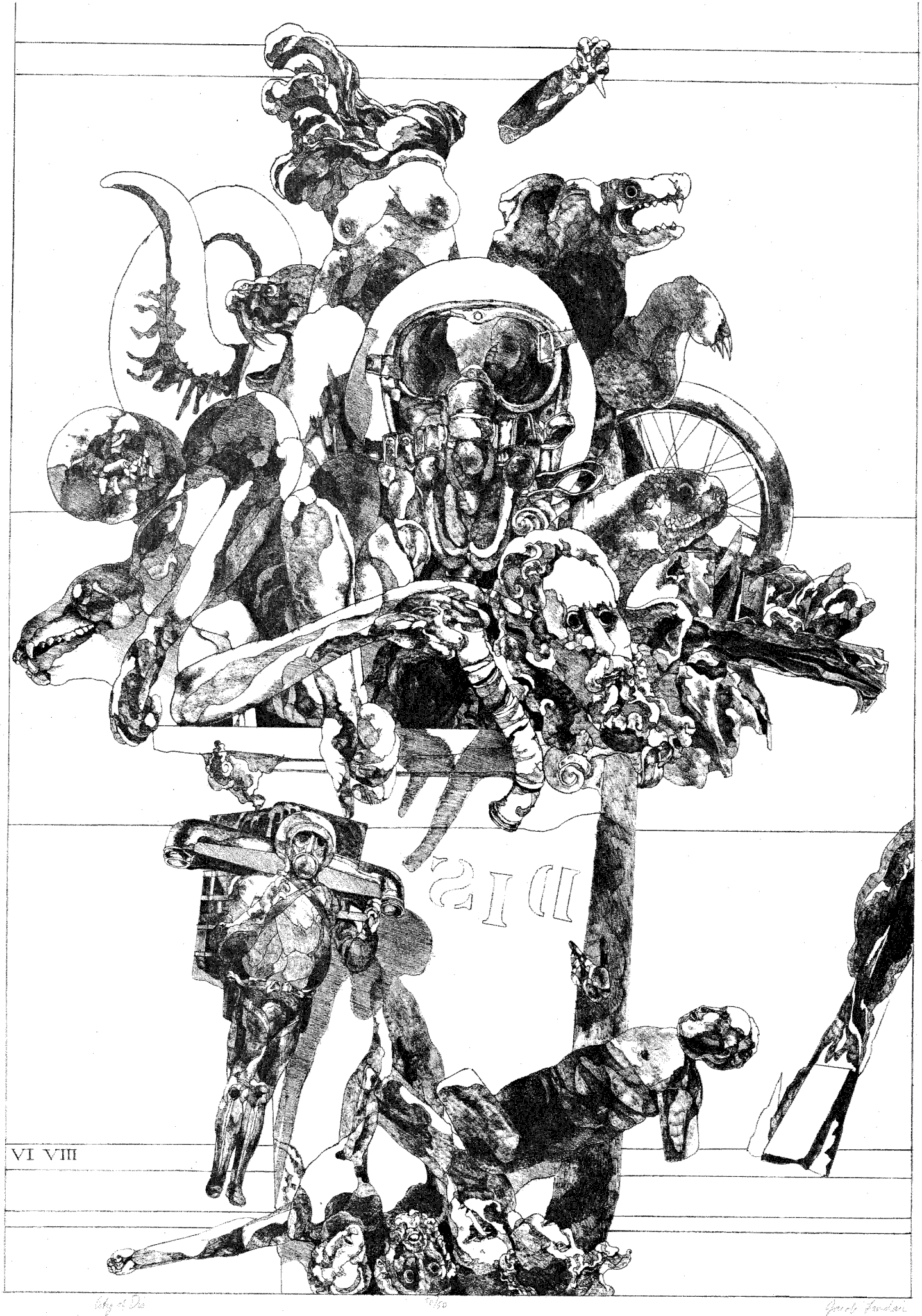

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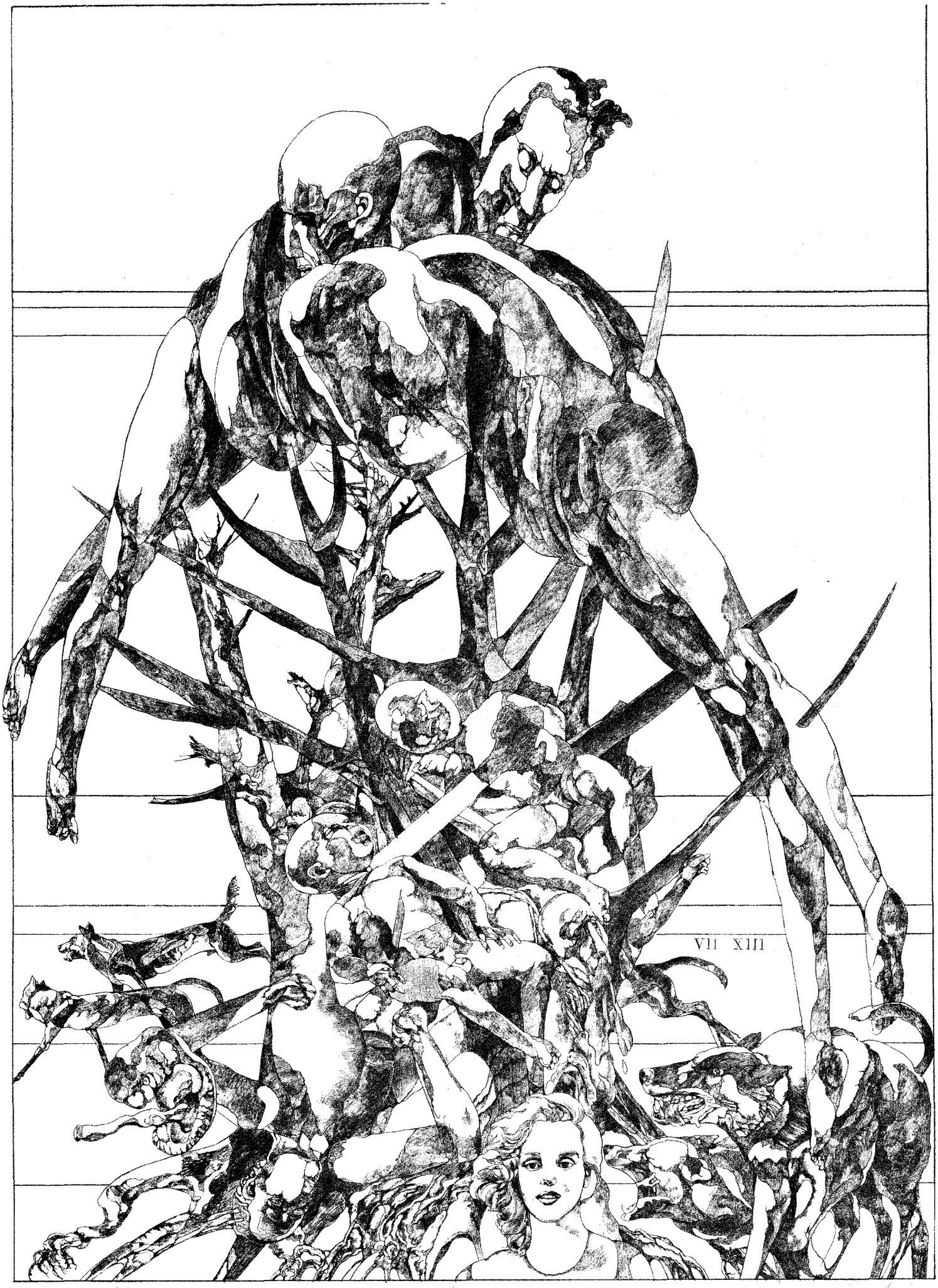

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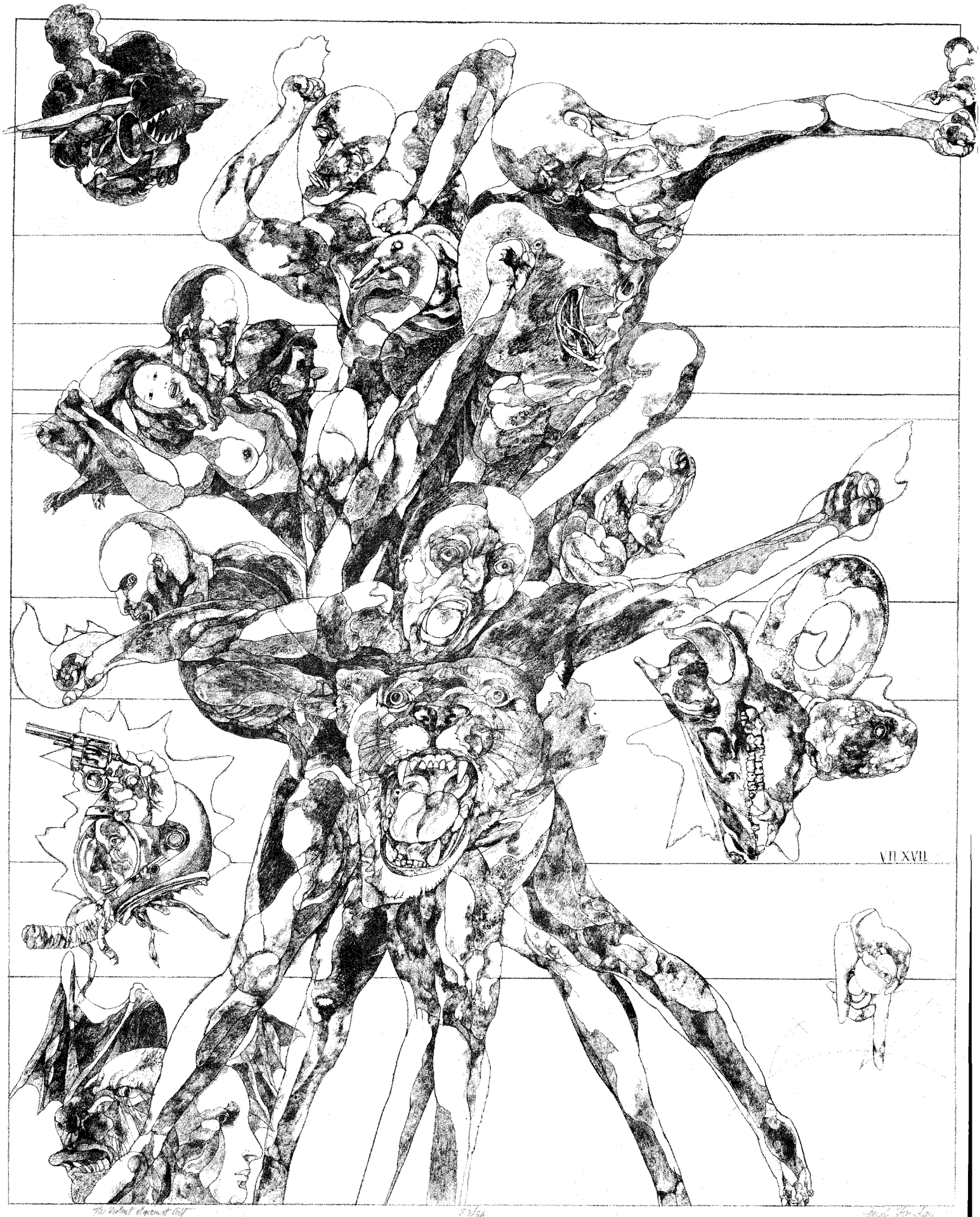

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The Zenith Circle 350 Jacob Landau

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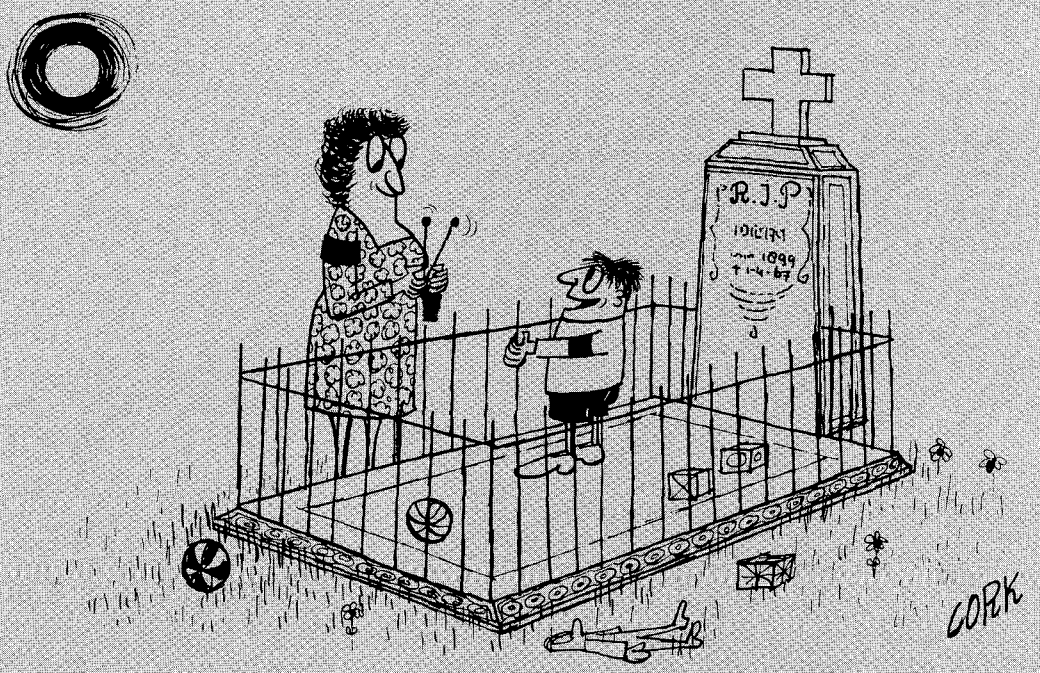
Fictions *Not* for Children



Mary Clearman
Fran Schumer
Karen Alpha
Anthony E. Stockanes
Barbara Langham Beyer

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MARY CLEARMAN

PREPARATION

Beth Anne's mother always maintained that it was practically impossible for the hospital to mix up the babies, what with footprints inked on the fancy cards first thing and the bead bracelets and all. But Beth Anne thought it seemed like the easiest thing in the world for them to do. After all, she only had their word for it she'd even had a baby. For instance, if she had happened to have a dead baby and some other woman had a baby she didn't want to keep, what could be simpler for the hospital than switching them around to come out even? Not that it made much difference, of course, because all the babies were very much alike. And she had ended up with four.

Beth Anne did not want to think of any babies experiencing pain even if they didn't happen to be hers, so she got the telephone book and hunted for Dr. Blanton's home phone number. The telephone was picked up on the third ring.

"Dr. Blanton's residence."

"Um," said Beth Anne, caught off balance. "Can I talk to Dr. Blanton?"

"May I know who's calling?"

"Beth Anne Chatelard."

"Who? Are you a patient of the doctor's?"

"I mean Beth Anne Weems."

The other woman sighed. "Do you want to make up your mind what your name is?"

"Mrs. Weems," said Beth Anne hastily. "I'm a patient." She wanted to explain how long she had been his patient, but Mrs. Blanton cut her off.

"Just a minute," she said wearily and laid down the phone.

Beth Anne waited. Abruptly the phone on the other end was snatched up.

"Yeah. Blanton."

"Um. Dr. Blanton?"

"Yeah, who's this?" The testiness of his voice rattled her; here she was bothering the busy doctor. But she stuck to it.

"This is Beth Anne Weems. You know my Valium prescription?"

"Oh, yeah, Beth Anne. My wife gave me a different name. What's the matter, you run out?"

"No. What I want to know is, will Valium kill my kids?"

There was a pause. "What?" he said, startled. "No, Valium won't kill 'em. What do you mean? You aren't leaving the bottle around where they can play with it, are you?"

"No, I just wondered—"

"Well, the worst Valium'll do is put 'em to sleep. All the same, you don't want to leave your prescription around where they can get into it. You aren't doing that, are you?"

"No."

"Well, then, okay. Just be careful, that's all."

"Okay."

"So Pete brought the kids home in time to spend Christmas with you after all. That's good. I wondered—that's quite a girl he's got now. Listen, honey," he said, a trifle more patiently. "Those pills helping you to relax?"

"Oh, yes."

"Fine. Oh, Beth Anne, one thing. You aren't having anything to drink, are you?"

"No," she lied defensively.

"Because those pills will double the effect of a drink. Fine. You call me, now, if it doesn't seem to you they're doing the job."

"Okay," said Beth Anne politely. She stood listening for a moment while the phone buzzed in her ear, but there was nothing more, the doctor had rung off.

Beth Anne hung up the receiver and turned, assailed by a silence in the apartment that puzzled her until she remembered that Janine and the baby had been crying and the boys had been fighting but now for some reason they had all subsided. She wandered into her bedroom to look for the bottle of Valium, stepping around the place where Janine huddled on the floor only to come up against the row of pictures strung along the top of the dresser, four children in artificial ice cream colors and herself and Pete blanched by a flash bulb.

The Valium, she reminded herself. It wasn't in the bedroom after all, but in the bathroom medicine chest. Beth Anne picked her way back through the hall and opened the mirrored door to find the new prescription where she had left it, still sealed in its clean drugstore envelope. She sat down on the edge of the bathtub and examined its contents. Like the last dose, the plastic bottle had a childproof top and she had to squint to line up the arrows before she could pop it loose. She pulled out the wad of cotton and poured some of the pills into her hand.

She was surprised at how small they were, smaller than she remembered. Slick and flat, easy to slide down. Even so, the baby would never be able to swallow them. Probably the boys wouldn't either.

Beth Anne carefully counted all the little pills back into the bottle and carried them out to the kitchen, where she laid a square of paper towel on the table and emptied

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MARY CLEARMAN has finished a novel, Sister Coyote, *and has returned to Northern Montana after summering in Rhode Island.*

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the pills in a heap in the middle. She counted them twice and began to divide them into four equal piles.

Being pregnant she remembered as first meaning not having a period, a not unpleasant symptom in itself once Dr. Blanton had confirmed the worst and said it was perfectly natural. At least she could stop worrying about what missing a period might signify; at least she could stop worrying about changing her napkin in time.

Then her legs began to ache. In spite of the support hose her mother had bought her, her legs ached during the wedding ceremony until the main thing on her mind was not how Pete's face was as washed-out as the stalks of narcissi her mother had ordered in, or where her father was, or anything that had happened in the terrible two weeks, but only how soon Father Ellison would get it over with so she could get off her feet. Her legs ached at the ankles and in her calf muscles, sharply painful when she stood on her feet in the morning and subsiding into a sullen throb when she sat down. Worst of all was the ache in her inner thighs, right up against her groin, where the support hose couldn't help. It was a varicose vein, her mother said, and it ached day and night.

"You never want to!" Pete accused her the second time she protested that her legs hurt too much when she spread them. Beth Anne choked and lay as still as she could on her side of the new double bed and when Pete's hand came over to rest on her buttocks she thought it meant he wasn't mad any longer, but soon the hand began to explore, pushing under the elastic leg of her baby doll pajamas to work its way deeper into the crack, tentative at first as if it didn't know what it might find there, then jabbing into her with urgency. Beth Anne began to cry.

"Shit!" Pete exploded out of the bed, hurling the bedcovers over the lurching coil springs. Beth Anne lay with her back turned, but she could hear him pulling on his pants.

"What are you going to do?" Beth Anne waited to ask until he was dressed and opening the bedroom door.

Pete turned with his hand on the doorknob. "You don't have to know that," he pronounced, and she understood from his tone that he had just scored a point according to rules she barely began to perceive.

Her body continued to change in ways she could never have surmised before her pregnancy. With fascinated horror she watched the heavy blue veins squirm to the surface of her breasts, watched her nipples spread and darken. She had had pretty nipples, prettier than she had ever appreciated. Now she held a hand mirror to see the way they covered the ends of her breasts, ugly, with lumps and puckers that made them look like something somebody would suck. And they were sore, like all the rest of her body.

She stood in front of the full length mirror in the late mornings, checking her belly for signs of growth. A watched pot never boiled. But in spite of her vigilance, her belly had stretched out the bottoms of her baby dolls before she noticed a change. From then on she could notice nothing else. She stood naked in front of the mirror, turning profile, holding the hand mirror to look for new angles. Her belly continued to grow like a thing apart from the rest of her body. Stretch marks like bluish-white worms sprang up across the growth. Beth Anne ran an experimental finger down one of the stretch marks and had the sensation of her belly splitting behind it like a parting zipper.

But the most unexpected and grotesque occurrence of all was when her navel popped out of its comfortable depression to protrude from her belly like a sore little nose. It showed through her new maternity clothes, as painful when she accidentally brushed it against something as were her nipples. Beth Anne thought the ugliest change of all in her body was the ruptured navel, whether she saw it sticking out of her bare belly or poking inquisitively through her clothes. She studied it from all sides in the mirror, hating it. Every high school girl knew that sexual intercourse with the boy you loved changed everything. Looking sourly at her navel, Beth Anne understood why nobody ever told exactly what was changed.

And now she sat in the kitchen of an apartment on the other side of town from the house she and Pete had shared on Hidden Valley Drive, staring at four equal heaps of pills on a paper towel. She remembered how much smaller than the other children Kami Dawn was, and after some thought removed several pills from her heap and divided them among the others. Working carefully to keep stray pills from hopping off the table, Beth Anne began to pound them into powder with the back of a cleaver.

The cleaver had been a wedding present, part of a set. The paring knife to the set was still around somewhere, tossed in a drawer; she didn't know what had happened to the rest of the stuff. There had been a lot of it, china dishes and straw place mats and decorated towels, and she didn't know what had become of any of it. Maybe she'd never really gotten any of the china or silver or crystal, only picked out patterns for the bridal registry. All the high school girls at that time had silver patterns picked out, and names for their children picked out. She had had Kevin and Jeremy picked out. On the other hand, though, she was pretty sure she had had at least some of the things, because she could remember looking at a row of crystal goblets on one particular occasion, but that had been in the bedroom, and what would the goblets have been doing in the bedroom? Maybe she had dreamed it. Pete had been pumping away behind her, a solution he'd hit upon when her nipples and navel became so tender she could not bear to have him climb on top of her, and she had leaned on the foot of the bed and looked at the goblets while she waited for him to finish.

Beth Anne finished pounding up the pills and laid down her cleaver. The mugs were in the cabinet next to the stove. Just as she put her hand on the catch, she had the sensation that she might open it and find the row of goblets. They had to be somewhere, they might be anywhere. Only her perception of time and space prevented her from opening a door here, anywhere, and finding the goblets, the silver, the lost light in Pete's face.

She pulled open the cabinet door. There were the mugs, yellow and orange and two pink ones. Yes, she had remembered to buy milk. She poured each mug almost full and then added to each its portion of the crushed Valium, which was a mistake because the powder floated

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on the surface and refused to dissolve. She found a spoon and stirred, but the granules stuck to the spoon and had to be wiped off with her fingers.

Her pregnancy had gone on and on. Her stomach grew until she was alarmed. Surely she couldn't grow bigger? But she did. Even her mother thought the growth was excessive.

"She's so *big* for only seven months," she marvelled to her women friends in front of Beth Anne. When they were alone she questioned her anxiously about her diet. "How much do you eat? All that weight has to come off afterwards."

Beth Anne thought her skin might split with the growth. She watched its progress in the full length mirror, noting how she was beginning to tilt back and arch her spine to offset her changing center of gravity. Her stomach grew of its own accord. One whole day she ate nothing and still it grew. She began to realize that nothing she could do would stop its course.

Pete didn't want her to be seen outside the house. "How come?" she pressed when she realized there was something behind his reluctance to take her to a movie or out for a beer with his old football buddies and their current girls.

"Doesn't look good."

"What doesn't? I'm just pregnant. It's natural to be pregnant." That was Dr. Blanton's answer to all her complaints; it was perfectly natural, he snapped whenever she ventured a question.

"Just doesn't. You should know without asking," Pete told her.

But she kept at him until, backed into a corner, he shouted in exasperation, "You want everybody to know you're that way?"

She remembered that in high school being pregnant meant you had been doing it and now everybody knew it. In spite of Dr. Blanton she began to realize there was something unnatural and decidedly nasty about her condition.

Surely the Valium had soaked into the milk by now. She stood up from the table. The apartment had grown dead quiet. She went to the door into the living room. Kami Dawn, she saw, had gone to sleep on the floor with her corduroys unsnapped from changing her diaper. Janine was crouched on the floor under the arm of the couch, her arms wound around her knees and her eyes looking at nothing. The emboweled grocery sack was spread out in the middle of the floor beside Janine's crayons, its thick dizzying colors straining to leap upward.

"Where's the boys?"

"I'n know."

Beth Anne looked in the small bedroom. A tiny sound caught her attention. She bent over and lifted up the trailing blanket from the bed.

"What're you doing under there?"

Jeremy whimpered again, but Kevin said, "Playing."

Beth Anne reached under the bed and caught hold of a foot. Jeremy's, she thought. The new blue and white tennis shoe seemed alien and heavy in her hand, much larger than her baby's foot wore. She tugged and out slid Jeremy along with the blanket off the bed and several rolls of dust.

"Playing what?"

"Cave."

"Well, come out of there, I want you to drink some milk."

She had expected them to argue, but even Kevin went along to the kitchen without a murmur. She had never seen them so obedient. Even Janine came quietly out to the table.

"I don't like this milk," said Janine when she tasted hers, but her voice was small and after a moment she swallowed.

Beth Anne went to get Kami Dawn. She hesitated a moment over the sleeping baby, limp as a rag doll in her disheveled clothing. It seemed a shame to wake her up to drink the dose of milk and Valium, but she was afraid her sleep would not be sound enough without it.

Kami Dawn's head lolled on Beth Anne's shoulder, but she woke up a little and fretted at the pain of the pressure on her diaper rash.

"Don't cry. They won't hurt long," Beth Anne counselled her. "After you go to sleep I'll go find Daddy."

"He went with Karen," said Janine.

Beth Anne propped the baby on her lap and held the mug for her. Kami Dawn's eyelids rose and sank. She took a little milk in her mouth and let some dribble out the corner, but Beth Anne was patient and pressed the mug on her again.

The three older children had finished theirs. They sat big-eyed, looking at nothing. Beth Anne thought their eyes had grown bigger since their stay with Pete, or else their facial skin had withdrawn over their skulls. She gave Kami Dawn a little more milk and waited. She had no idea how long it would take the dose to work so she could safely leave the apartment in search of Pete.

Janine pushed back from the table and wandered through the door into the living room. Kevin crowded against Jeremy and gave him a shove.

"Quit!" whined Jeremy out of habit.

"Quit taking all my room!" But even Kevin had lost interest and Beth Anne did not bother to reprimand him. With Kami Dawn limp on her shoulder, she got up and followed Janine into the living room.

Janine had climbed up on the couch and was curled into one end. Beth Anne started to lay Kami Dawn down beside her, then remembered that she might roll off on the floor and carried her into the bedroom and put her into her crib instead.

When she came back out, the boys had come into the living room. Kevin had a plastic soldier in each hand, squaring them off at each other, but Jeremy was sucking his thumb and Beth Anne thought it would only be a matter of minutes before they were asleep. She thought of getting her coat and then decided to wait until she was sure they were settled; they could hurt themselves so easily.

She sat down in the kitchen to wait, her mind a blank that gradually unfolded in colors and voices and faces. It was the first pregnancy that kept coming back to remind her how something had gone bad.

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At first she had thought she had eaten something that disagreed with her. All morning it had gnawed away at her stomach so she couldn't sit still. She tried to move her bowels to relieve it, but nothing happened. It was not until four in the afternoon when, sitting on the toilet with her mottled stomach resting on her upper legs and her maternity slacks down around her ankles, she happened to look down and see the stain of blood in the crotch of her panties that it dawned on her that she might be in labor.

Getting sick, the women called it. "She got sick that night and went into the hospital, but it didn't really start for another twenty-four hours," one of the women related of some acquaintance's daughter to Beth Anne's mother.

"How will I know when it starts?" Beth Anne asked her mother later.

"You'll know, all right," said her mother with a sharp little laugh, but she did not elaborate, and Beth Anne was left to patch together half-remembered conversations among her mother's friends with snippets from novels or movies about boiling plenty of hot water and expecting pains every three minutes.

Right now she wasn't having any pains except the gnaw of indigestion, but she thought she might call her mother at the dress shop and report the blood. Clutching at her slacks she hobbled to the princess phone by the bed.

"Oh, God yes!" said her mother when she finally came to the phone after a long wait until she could get rid of a customer. "You've started, all right."

"I have?" Her first reaction was pure delight that it wasn't another cramp or muscle twitch that she might be talking herself into taking seriously. It really was coming to an end and she was going to be normal again.

"You'll change that tune before the night's over," said her mother grimly. "Where's Pete? Or do you know?"

Beth Anne hesitated. Pete was so surly she hated to question him about which shift he had for the week. Her mother would commiserate with her if she admitted she didn't know, but for some reason Beth Anne didn't want to listen to her. "He's—" She thought as fast as she could. "If he's out with the beer truck someplace, there's no way to get hold of him. He—lots of times he comes home about seven o'clock." That was when his friends quit drinking downtown and went home for supper.

Her mother snorted. "I'll call Pruitt at the warehouse, that's what I'll do. Prew'll know where he is."

The silence dragged unhappily on. "Well?" said her mother sharply. "There are three women waiting in front."

"But—is that all? What do I do?"

"Do what? You wait, that's all. You'll wish soon enough you hadn't been in such a hurry."

Beth Anne wandered disconsolately about the house, looking out the front windows from time to time for signs of her mother's car or Pete's in the driveway. Her legs felt heavy, her breasts and the heavy stomach dragging at her. The growth had knotted as tight as a clenched fist and the varicose veins in her thighs throbbed, but she could not stay sitting down. The gnaw of discomfort was gradually changing into something definite. If she had known ahead of time what it felt like, she would never have mistaken a cramp or twitch for the real thing, she knew that already. Something had taken hold of her and was happening on its own and there was nothing, she realized with the first touch of panic, that she could do to stop it. Would it hurt? Of course she knew it would *hurt*, just as she knew that holding the baby afterward made it all worthwhile, but would it *really* hurt, more than she could stand?

She had never known time to pass so slowly, but at last she heard her mother's car in the drive and went to look. Her mother was just getting out from behind the wheel, still in the four-inch heels and the pale green suit she had worn in the shop. Pete was climbing out of the passenger side, looking cross. Beth Anne knew he hated to ride in a car somebody else was driving.

Her mother clattered across the kitchen and right on past Beth Anne. "Where's your suitcase? You mean you haven't packed yet?"

Beth Anne followed her into the bedroom, thinking to explain that she hadn't packed a suitcase because she was in labor, but her mother's exasperated face told her she had made another mistake; of course she might as well have been packing instead of pacing from window to window all afternoon.

"Here," said her mother, dragging the blue weekender from the matching set out of the closet. "This should be all right. They may keep you the full five days."

Under her direction Beth Anne took cosmetics and underthings out of drawers and packed them with nightgowns and slippers and one of her old school skirts and a sweater to wear home.

"If they still fit," cautioned her mother. "Now honey, don't *drag* so. Pete wants to take you to the hospital now so he can get his supper later on."

"You're not coming?"

"Honey, it isn't like there's anything I can *do*. I'll be up to see you tomorrow."

Tomorrow was another eon. But her mother was already gathering up her handbag. Pete, who had been hanging longfaced around the bedroom door, came in to carry the suitcase. Beth Anne began to understand that a ritual was taking place, in which Pete's part was to carry the suitcase and drive her to the hospital, rather like opening doors for her on prom night.

They were ready, but her mother unaccountably stopped to finger the bedroom curtains on the way out. "They turned out nice, didn't they?" she said.

Beth Anne looked in surprise at the puffed layers of dotted swiss that turned the afternoon light pink and made her mother's face look young and sad. Panic was edging up, refusing to subside. Her mother, the other women, knew what was going to happen to her. Why wouldn't they divulge?

Pete was putting her suitcase in the trunk of her mother's car. "Come *on*," he nagged, holding the door for her. Beth Anne was again reminded of prom night as she eased her bulk into the seat.

"I have a dinner date," her mother was telling Pete. "With Douglas Spindell. But you can reach me afterward if it's really necessary. It probably won't be. They'll probably send you home as soon as you get her signed in."

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The snowless winter afternoon was gathering gloom across the leafless cottonwoods of the residential streets and over the bare hills that ringed the town. Pete turned on the headlights and took the hospital road.

"Immph—" the pain startled the grunt out of her. She couldn't have told anybody else what it was like, but it really hurt. Her heart started to thump and she looked wildly at Pete.

"Take it easy," Pete advised her with his eyes on the road. "Your mother said there'd be no big deal until later."

By the time Pete turned up the long stone-bordered drive to the night entrance, it was quite dark and Beth Anne's feet were jammed against the floorboards and the growth of her belly was rigid.

"Immph—" it took her breath away.

Pete glared at her. "Oh, Jesus Christ!"

"But it hurts!" Two tears rolled down. "I can't stand it!"

"You can't—oh for chrissake!" But Pete was trembling himself as he found a parking place and got her suitcase out of the back seat and carried it for her up the long flight of stone steps. He waited in the hall with his hands in his pockets while Beth Anne tried to think of the answers to all the questions the nurse at the desk had.

"Come through here."

Another nurse took her arm and Beth Anne allowed herself to be led out of the hall and into a large, brilliantly lit room with several stirruped examination tables and a row of doorless toilet cubicles across one end.

"Sign this."

"What is it?"

"Receipt for your watch and wedding ring."

Beth Anne scrawled her name, remembering to write Weems instead of Chatelard, while the nurse dropped her things with a clink into a brown envelope and sealed it.

"Get into this."

Beth Anne took the folded white cotton. It turned out to be a hospital gown, split up the back and starched. She started to ask where Pete was, but the nurse had already vanished through the swinging doors, so she got undressed, fumbling with her buttons and gasping when the pain came, and put on the hospital gown. It hit her at knee-level. Her stomach protruded so far in front that the gown gaped wide in back, exposing her buttocks.

The nurse materialized through the doors with a tray of equipment. "Up on the table."

"Where's Pete, I mean my husband?" asked Beth Anne, obeying.

"He can't come in here, you've got to be prepped," said the nurse, astonished. "Here, feet in the stirrups."

Beth Anne felt her crotch being bathed with something warm. Then the nurse selected an instrument from her tray. Unexpectedly something hit Beth Anne and she yelped.

"Guess that blade's getting a little dull," the nurse admitted, bending to her work. "You've got to hold still, now!"

Beth Anne lay gritting her teeth and bearing the weight of her stomach while the razor scraped and jerked across her privates. She longed to arch her back to relieve the ache, but she feared the nurse's annoyance. The bright overhead lights burned at her sockets even when she screwed her eyes shut.

"There," said the nurse at last, dropping something into a jar of liquid. "Over on your side now, and draw up your knees."

Beth Anne obeyed awkwardly. At first it was a relief to support her belly on the examination table. It had been months since she could sleep comfortably on her back. But she was nervous about the nurse. She had caught a glimpse of her wearing the yellow rubber gloves Dr. Blanton donned every time he came near her. Something was being wheeled up behind her. Beth Anne stiffened as a finger laden with grease probed her anus.

"Hold still!" warned the nurse.

Beth Anne dug her fingernails into her palms, but in spite of herself she clenched all her muscles when a cold tube tried to penetrate her anus.

The nurse slapped down her instrument and marched around the table. "Look here! This will be over with as soon as you cooperate! If you're going to act like a baby, you'll make this worse."

She returned to her tray. Beth Anne felt the hospital gown lifted, a spot on her hip swabbed with something cold. The hypodermic jabbed.

"Now then," said the nurse, wheeling something closer to the table. Beth Anne felt fingers spread her buttocks apart, felt the cold tube slide into her. She began to cry. She wanted to kick, but she couldn't seem to make her legs move in the right direction. It was as if they were tangled in something. The nurse reached around and did something to an overhead valve. There was a gush, and Beth Anne felt herself filling up with something wet and warm, at first not unpleasant, but soon filling her so full she knew she couldn't hold more. And yet it kept flowing. Beth Anne struggled.

"That's about half," mused the nurse.

"That's enough!" Beth Anne begged. She was apparently not thrashing as hard as she thought she was, because the nurse didn't seem alarmed, only stood there with one hand pinching her buttocks closed over the tube and the other on the valve. Beth Anne thought she would burst. "Please!" she wept, but the tube with its merciless flow stayed where it was.

With no more warning than it had entered, the tube retracted. As it did, the nurse's fingers clamped Beth Anne's buttocks together hard. "Just another minute now until it does its job."

Beth Anne waited under the inexorable overhead lights. She was afraid to breathe and unable to move. She could feel the paper-covered pad under her cheek and see a stainless steel bar six inches from her face. Beyond that was a tiled wall. The lights burned on. Just as she thought she would be suspended between bursting and containing the enema for the rest of time, the nurse released her with a reluctant sigh.

"That may be enough, I don't know."

Beth Anne rolled off the table at the nurse's first words and tried to run for a toilet cubicle on rubbery legs. Just in time she made it to the stool with the gown parting behind her and felt her bowels collapse into the bowl in a gush of

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broken feces and soapsuds. She leaned over her stomach to rest her face on her knees and weep exhausted tears until the rigidity of her womb forced her to sit up straight.

She saw her legs, shanks and knees looking white and inadequate under the bulge of her abdomen. Planted on the damp tile in front of the toilet bowl were her feet, white and sparsely haired and slightly gray under the toenails. As she sat dripping soapy water into the bowl and staring at her own feet, it seemed to Beth Anne that she had come to the end of an inhuman process no one had warned her would seize her up and refuse to let her go until it had reduced her to this quivering, ugly hulk. Who would believe this swollen belly with its spidery white legs and its stench had ever been corseted into white tulle and taken to a prom?

And still the nurse was at hand, urging her to her feet. Beth Anne remembered that she was having a baby.

"Don't wipe," the nurse warned her.

Beth Anne eased off the toilet, dripping, and wobbled under the nurse's guidance to the table. A pain gripped her as she prepared to climb up, and she clutched at the nurse.

"You've got a long time to wait," said the nurse impatiently. "No, no! Lay on your back!"

"But it's so heavy."

"All the same, that's the way you have to lay." The nurse collected her tray and vanished.

Beth Anne settled back under the weight of her abdomen and waited. The lights stung her eyes until she put one hand over them. She could see lines of glowing red between her fingers, but it helped until her arm began to ache. Nothing else happened.

She began to hear the sounds of the hospital. Something on rubber wheels passing in the hall, a doctor being paged far away. The labor room door stayed shut. Her abdomen weighed painfully against her vitals. She looked for her watch to see how much time had passed and then remembered that the nurse had taken it away.

A giant pain gripped her without warning and squeezed until she could not get her breath, bearing down and grinding like all the weight of the world while the overhead lights danced with blue and purple spots. Terrified, Beth Anne fought for air, fought to stay in one piece. The room rumbled and turned. Just as she thought she would strangle, the pain eased away and she nearly choked on a great draught of breath. As it ebbed, she began to cry. It really was going to hurt more than she could stand. If she had known, she would never, never, have done it on purpose.

The doors swung open and she became aware that the nurse was there, talking to Pete. "—might as well go home and have a good night's sleep, nothing going to happen before morning and nothing you can do—"

"Pete!" Beth Anne clutched at him as he came around the table.

He prised her fingers loose, smiling kindly. "You heard her, it isn't like there's anything I can do—"

Beth Anne tried to explain how frightening it was to be all by herself in the big brilliant room, and how much it would help to know somebody was there even if they couldn't do anything, but in the middle of a sentence the pain grabbed her again and scrunched down and turned the room purple. Pete freed himself from her fingers and vanished. The pain ground on and on before it ebbed and left her panting.

"I can't stand this!" she screamed when she got her breath.

The nurse appeared from somewhere and swabbed her hip. Beth Anne received the hypodermic jab joyfully. As her legs numbed she was able to lie back on the paper-covered pad and let her tears dry while the pains came and went through a rumbling distance. Thunder, she thought dimly. Rain. It was hot in here. She wished she could get out from under the heavy hospital gown. She wished she could get off the hard table. Her legs wouldn't work. Somewhere a telephone was ringing. A rubber-wheeled cart rumbled in the hall, and with its passing went another woman's sobs—"Owee, owee," like a small child's.

And then a pain crushed down upon her with all the force it ever had and more, taking her by surprise as she drowsed. Beth Anne straightened and tried to cry, but she knew it wasn't going to stop until it had squeezed her apart. It ebbed, and she yelled while she had the chance, because another contraction was following right behind it.

"I'd be ashamed of being such a baby," the nurse was saying from between her legs.

"It hurts!" Beth Anne howled while she had her breath, and the nurse mumbled something about not daring another shot for thirty minutes, but Beth Anne lost

track because another pain had hit her. "Mommy!" she screamed when she could, because surely her mother would come and get her, because this was a mistake, because surely nobody could stand what was happening to her.

There were women talking in the room. "—any coffee left?"

"—I don't know, must be pretty black by now."

"No, it's been a slow night, one other one and this one—glad to let you have her, she's been screaming her head off, scared to death, poor kid—"

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Someone, a strange nurse, was doing something to her hindquarters. "Okay," called the nurse. The rumbling cart was coming through the swinging doors, alongside the table. Hands guided Beth Anne from one to the other. The cart moved off, bearing her through a corridor and into a second brilliantly lit room with high eastern windows where the night was beginning to lighten. She was being moved off the cart to another table. At first she settled back, distracted from her terror of the pain by the movements about her, but abruptly she jerked away. They had strapped one wrist to the table, had strapped her knees apart. Beth Anne saw her own feet waggling helplessly in the air. Beth Anne fought, but her other wrist was pinned down and strapped. She knew they would tear her to pieces. Already she was being split lengthwise at the crotch.

"Behave yourself!" boomed Dr. Blanton in a voice like thunder.

"Gas?" somebody said.

"Not yet."

"Bear down," somebody said.

"Now the gas."

Something was being fitted over her face, hot rubber with a foreign smell.

"Take a deep breath," said somebody, and Beth Anne took at first a cautious taste and then, as the gas came rushing with its velvet relief, she sucked as hard as she could at the depths of unconsciousness and an end to her ordeal. It was not until the next afternoon after she had been sewed up and washed and had slept off the gas that they brought a baby up from the nursery and told her it was hers. □

WILLIAM LOGAN

THE MISBEGOTTEN

Your face smiles in the dark glass.
All day you have been
The shadow at my shoulder, the breath
At my ear in the ignorant calm. The leaves
Give up. The day gives up
And the light shrinks to the low planet
Out across the water.
Now the moon
Has broken a vein, and blinks,
Half-closed and bloody.

Brother, brother, you are a jealous god
Of memory. For days when you slid
Into my dreams, you were a sister,
Or a swan, like the swan I saw,
Midsummer, out on the dark waves,
Too confused to come in.

Now the stars flower in the glass.
I thought that windows gave us safety
From the night, the way
The sun's violence is turned
By a common sky. Tonight they all are mirrors.

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FRAN SCHUMER

NADINE AND HER MOTHER ON THE BEACH

Nadine's mother was saying that she would have killed the baby.

"Absolutely. The minute that doctor walked out of the room I would've taken a pillow and put that baby out of its misery."

Nadine looked at her pale face reflected in her mother's round, black sunglasses. She squinted because the reflection was so bright. At noon the sun was white at Sea Point, the southern tip of Long Island where the Bennetts had their summer cottage. Noon was the best time to get a tan, Mrs. Bennett said. Nadine's face looked broad and pasty in her mother's glasses. Her nose looked flat, too pug. Nadine could tell that her mother was still talking, for she could see Mrs. Bennett's even white teeth appear and disappear behind her glossed lips, but she caught only one word: vegetable. Nadine examined the smooth surface on her mother's legs. Perfectly tanned and hairless. Mrs. Bennett took special wax treatments so that she didn't have any after-shave stubble. There was not a birthmark or a scratch on them. Nadine herself took after 'your grandma Bennett,' her mother often said, pointing out that it was from that side of the family that Nadine had inherited her beauty marks and dark body hair. And her pale skin. Nadine would get burned sitting in the sun with her mother. She knew it.

She imagined her mother, bronzed and oiled in a strapless black one-piece, lifting a pink frilly pillow high above her head—her gold bracelets falling up her arm—and suffocating the baby.

"What if you got caught, ma?"

"Oh they'd know why I did it. They'd know, Nadine. And if the doctors took me to court, the judge would understand. I mean how could you go through life like that, with a child that you'd have to take to the bathroom when she was 21? She'd never be able to speak or to read or to feel. Oh the heartbreak. The heartbreak of having to watch your own child be like that. I'd kill that child for its own sake. I'd be doing that baby a favor."

Nadine thought it would be an awful thing to have to have your mother go to the bathroom with you when you were 21. She was nine and could go to the bathroom by herself. In fact, she liked to excuse herself and get up to go to the bathroom herself, particularly in restaurants. You could get up and walk around and imagine that everyone there was thinking how lovely you looked in your Best & Co. jumper. Perhaps people watching would think you were a young actress, a child star, maybe a relation to royalty. Yes, that was what she liked about getting up and going to the ladies room by herself: People could imagine that she was anything she wanted them to. But if her mother had to come with her all the time—Ugh. Then they would know that she was just Nadine.

"What was wrong with the baby, ma?"

"There was something wrong with her spine. She was born without a spinal cord, something like that. The doctor said she would be retarded all her life, a vegetable. You know. Like that girl Helene. Remember? Mrs. Marks' daughter. The one who drooled all over the table even though she was as old as you."

A waiter came down the cabana steps to the beach to take their lunch orders. Mrs. Bennett ordered her usual: shrimp salad on one slice of bread, iced coffee and saccharin. Nadine ordered a hamburger and french fries. Nadine once asked her mother why she didn't get the sandwich on two slices of bread and give the piece she didn't want to Nadine, who loved bread. Mrs. Bennett had said she didn't even want the extra slice on her plate. Didn't want it near her. Would rather just not have it there to tempt her. Nadine didn't understand. Really. Her mother was quite thin. Too thin, her father always said.

Nadine thought she saw her face getting redder in her mother's sunglasses. She checked under her bathing suit strap and saw a thin white line. A bad sign. A sunburn beginning.

"Ma. I think I'm getting burned. Maybe we should go now."

"Nonsense, Nadine. You're white as a ghost. It's your first day out here since camp and I think you should try to get a nice tan before we go back to the city. Nobody wants to be pale in New York in September."

Nadine remembered the blue-white skin of Helene. Mrs. Marks said it was because most days Helene stayed at home with her nurse. Helene drooled. Nadine was disgusted when she remembered all that dribble. She thought Mrs. Marks would have been very embarrassed for having her daughter mess up the lovely luncheon table Mrs. Bennett had set. But no. Mrs. Marks didn't seem to mind. She smiled and cheerfully wiped Helene's chin

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with Mrs. Bennett's good linen napkins—apologizing once, no more. Nadine thought she rather liked that. Mrs. Marks didn't nag Nadine to take Helene into her room and play like her own mother kept doing during lunch. What did her mother expect her to do with Helene in her room. What if she drooled? And on Nadine's shag carpet? But Mrs. Marks didn't encourage Mrs. Bennett's suggestion. No, she said she'd prefer to just sit with Helene on her lap while she and Mrs. Bennett chatted. She was quite firm about that. Nadine was relieved. She moved a little closer to Mrs. Marks and Helene. Really, Helene was rather sweet. You just had to think of her as a baby instead of a nine-year-old. Nadine talked to her in baby talk. Helene giggled. Nadine liked that. She took the napkin from Mrs. Marks to wipe Helene's chin. Helene looked up at Nadine. She had very pretty blue eyes.

The cabana boy brought their lunch.

"You're getting awfully pink, Diney," he said, pulling the waistband of her bathing suit and letting it snap back.

"Cut that out, will ya, Tony?"

God, Nadine hated when he did that. It hurt. And she had a beauty mark under that strap that she didn't want anyone to see.

Nadine's mother balanced the shrimp salad on its one slice of bread and took a bite. Nadine ate a french fry.

"Ma, could I have some salt?"

"I don't have any."

"What's in those packets over there?"

"That's diet sweetener. For the coffee."

"Mrs. Morris told us in school last term that that stuff can give you cancer. It gives cancer to rats."

"They say that about everything. Besides, I'd rather die ten years earlier and ten pounds thinner. And it's not rats, Nadine. It's mice."

"Don't you think you're thin enough, ma?"

"You're never thin enough. Besides, you have to watch it. When you get older, you'll have to watch it too. You won't always be able to eat french fries like that."

In the pictures of when she was Nadine's age, Mrs. Bennett was plump. Nadine's father laughed and laughed when he looked through those old photos. He said he liked women with meat on their bones. He said Adrienne was like that when they first married—pink and plump and just so cute. He reached out to pinch Mrs. Bennett but she swerved away.

"Cut it out, Lew," she had said. "I wasn't cute. I was fat. And I looked awful."

Nadine's father always joked that his wife was half the woman he married. Nadine had heard her mother tell her father she was sick of that joke.

It was two hours after lunch when Mrs. Bennett noticed Nadine's color. She dropped her Times in the sand and peered over her sunglasses.

"You *are* getting pink, Nadine. I think I'll call your father and see if he can meet us early for dinner. Go back to the cabana and dress. I'll be up soon."

Nadine liked that idea. She liked meeting her father in the city for dinner Friday nights. Usually they'd go out to eat and then her father would ride back with them to the beach and stay the whole weekend. It wasn't half so bad when her father was there. He didn't just lie on the beach all day. He took her into the ocean and rode the waves with her. He let her sit on his shoulders and hold on to his shiny bald head as the white caps surged over them. Just the two of them. Nadine's brothers were away for the summer, still at camp like most of her friends. Mrs. Bennett said she wanted Nadine home in August to keep her company at the beach, since Lew stayed in the city all week.

Nadine hoped they would go to L'Etoile tonight. It had a pastry cart and Nadine adored pastry. Her mother said Côte Basque was much nicer, though; quieter. Côte Basque did not have a pastry cart. "They're vulgar," Mrs. Bennett had said. Well, Côte Basque would have rolls and butter anyway, Nadine thought. And second to pastry, Nadine loved rolls and butter. Nadine thought she felt a little better, even though she was now more than a bit pink.

She turned on the shower in the cabana but the spray hurt her sunburn. She shut off the water and dried off. That hurt too. She put on some of her mother's powder and got dressed. She had read two chapters of her book on Madame Curie when her mother finally arrived.

"You look lovely with that nice healthy burn. Come here. Let me fix your shirt."

Mrs. Bennett untucked the white blouse from Nadine's sailor pants and tied it in a knot above her midriff.

"There. Now you look like a real beach beauty. Bring me the Noxema. I'll put a dot on your nose."

Nadine stared down at her pink stomach while her mother dabbed at her nose. She dipped her finger into the blue jar and scooped out some cream.

"Nadine. What are you doing?"

"I'm just putting some stuff on my beauty mark. It shows when you tie up my shirt like that."

"For goodness' sake. Don't be silly. No one will notice it. Besides, I told you when you get older you can have it removed. Now wipe that cream off and take a look in the mirror. You look adorable. Lovely. A little model. Color does marvelous things for your face."

Nadine thought she looked stupid with that cream on her nose, and she didn't like the idea of parading around with her beauty mark sticking out. She put on her mother's sunglasses. That looked better. Very chic. She couldn't wait to show her father.

Well, don't we look delightful," he said when Nadine and her mother strolled into the restaurant. "My two beach beauties." He kissed Nadine on the cheek and pulled the chair out for his wife.

"Actually Nadine felt a little sick on the train, Lew. I think maybe I let her sit in the sun too long."

"Well, is she too sick to have dessert?"

Nadine grinned. This new restaurant didn't look too bad, although she hadn't seen any dessert cart yet. All grownups. Not a single other girl her age. She liked that. Just she and all these adults. The women all looked very pretty, except her mother really did look the most beautiful. Nadine was wondering whether to take her first stroll

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to the bathroom now or check the desserts on the menu when she noticed a woman wave to her mother from across the restaurant and walk toward their table. She picked up the menu and began to go down the list of desserts when she heard the woman mention the baby.

"Well, I know how awful you must feel," she heard her mother say. "I didn't want to bring it up, you know. I know how difficult it must be for you and Alex. But look. Maybe it's the best thing after all. You would have had a life full of heartache. You'll get over it...."

Nadine looked at the list: *mousse chocolate*, *tarte aux fraises*. She didn't feel very hungry. Her stomach hurt. She looked up. The woman had gone.

"What a shame," her father said. "The little girl didn't even make it out of the hospital. And the other Paley kids are so healthy."

"Ma? What happened? Did that lady kill her baby?"

"Of course not," her father said. "The girl was born very sick. She was retarded. She would have been a very sick girl had she lived. She died because her spine was improperly formed. What ever made you think Mrs. Paley would have killed her?"

Mrs. Bennett interrupted. "You weren't very polite, Nadine. You could've managed a smile when I introduced you. C'mon, Lew. Let's order. I'm hungry."

Nadine looked at her menu again. She wasn't sure she felt like eating tonight. Her skin was burning and her stomach hurt.

"And the young lady?" the waiter said.

"C'mon baby. What do you want?" her father said. "You can have anything you want."

"I don't think I'll order anything. I'm not hungry. I think I'd like to be excused."

"Not even a dessert? What did you do, fill up on rolls already?"

"Let her be, Lew. I told you she wasn't feeling well on the train. She said her stomach hurt."

Nadine felt the saliva gathering in her mouth.

"Diney. Drink some water."

She let her mother tilt the glass into her mouth but the water wouldn't go down. She started gagging.

"Dammit, Adrienne. She's got sun poisoning. Jesus, anyone would have more sense than to let the kid sit in the sun all day like that. You and your ideas about how she ought to look. Like some model. Well for Chrissakes..."

Nadine didn't hear the rest. She felt her mother's nails digging into her arm. She felt her legs dragging across the carpet. She saw the faces of all these grownups, staring. Then she saw it: She saw herself drool. And a terrible burning inside her rushed out. □

WAYNE ZADE

FIRST CHILD

1. *February*

Snow
has begun to resist
the furrows;

in wind the flakes
collect like plants

indoors
under lamps,

and the child
who is brilliant upon a stalk

gives up the air
a little above the earth

for more

2. *The Dream*

In my wife's dream,
she had borne a son.
A fan turned in a slow arc,
and his voice rose above children's;
he crawled above sheets on a bed,
speaking to women
in their own language,
and then he sucked.

When she told me this,
I was standing in the breeze,
out of the sun, out of touch,
and I remembered the child
inside her, head up
and tilted to the light
so long he could make out
the waves of air on her breasts.

3. *First Child*

Low-beam lights in fog.
When the car turned I saw
an animal's eyes betray
his claw on the world.
Advance, retreat. I moved.
I woke from a dream.
My mother, in whom
I was sleeping, dreamed on.
I saw my father rise
from the bed, naked,
the moon lighting
the hair on his legs.
Alone, he waited
to re-enter the world.
When he could not see,
I took his name.

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KAREN ALPHA

CONTAGION

Sam and Anna Paget. They sound like a pleasant couple. Anna Paget. A piano teacher's name, a librarian. Sam possibly a sculptor; less interestingly, a history professor at some small state college. Sam and Anna Paget. I liked the names immediately; they seemed to speak of quiet reserve and solidarity, of comfortable evenings at home with a book, of a consciously shared life. Sam and Anna. Their familiar names rhyme, a close interior rhyme joining them together on the tongue, a mellifluous compact sound, a pleasing tight effect.

The call came from a friend who knew I worked at home and was susceptible to such requests. "The appointment is at one o'clock and she's got no way to get there. I'm babysitting for her; can you drive?"

I searched for a good enough reason to say no, shuffling in my mind through all the things I'd tentatively planned to do tomorrow, had saved the day for, and then I said, "Oh what the hell, sure." There was still the morning.

"Anna Paget," said my friend, and gave me the address, the phone number too in case it snowed.

It did snow, but not enough. I was standing outside the back door when she opened it; I guess she hadn't heard my knock because she came close to dropping the child she was carrying. "What a start. What a start she give us. Nearly scare us half to death, my goodness, scare us half to death she did!"

Anna Paget spoke with a twang in a voice that was neither male nor female but hard and self-protective, and a little loud. It was a country-and-western talkin-to-the-boys voice and I wondered where she'd acquired it. She wasn't very old, younger than I, probably not yet thirty; although I was to discover she had three children (the eldest was nine) and whether she was twenty-six or forty remained beyond me.

We had no sooner regained the main road than she stated, "His father up and left us four months ago. Just walked out." As if this were information I required. Or would wish to discuss. "The other two haven't seen him since December 8th. This one since January 1st." I admired her grasp of dates. ("This one's" name was Mark, a fact he coyly surrendered at my request; and since Mark is one of my favorite names I made much of it in the manner of those things, which pleased him.)

We were on our way to a family counselling center where, my friend had informed me, Anna hoped to get some help about a difficulty coping with her children. "Oh yes, he works in town. He says his responsibility to me ended when he walked out. Just like that. No alimony, I get something for the kids. He says he's not responsible for the kids neither 'cause they're not his. He denies his kids, says they're not even his." I wonder for a minute if this might be so. "Yet he wants them. Wants to take them right away from me. Says he wants our kids." I stop wondering. "I have to be so careful. Can't even take nothing from the doctor for my nerves. His lawyer will take ahold of that and say I'm a drug addict. He's tricky, I can't take anything not nothing at all or I'm a drug addict and he'll use that against me to take my kids."

"That's ridiculous," I said, "half the population is on tranquilizers."

"I know. I've heard 'em say they just can't get through the day without a pill in the morning. Everybody takes a pill for something. But not me. I got to be careful or his lawyer . . . ."

"Have you got a lawyer?" I'm thinking which of my legal friends I will tell her to call.

"They are reluctant to take my case as I have no funds." She says this very formally, as if it is difficult to say but she must keep repeating it. I realize I don't know any of them well enough to suggest they work for free. "There was suppose to be money for me *and* the kids, the judge said, but when it came down it was just some for the kids and it got all mixed up between when the judge said and what came down so now we have to run it through again so there's some for all of us we have to run it back through."

I nod as if I understand this.

"And she goes around town using my name, saying she's me, Mrs. Sam Paget, but she's not never has been I can prove it. She's crazier than he is; it's all her fault her the one he's with. She's really crazy, he wasn't so bad until she got ahold of him it's her that does it to him. Well you know he's got his kids fixed at two years old."

After a second I turn to her. "What?"

"He's fixed his kids at two years old. That's where they are. For him his kids are two years old." I must be looking at her blankly because she keeps explaining this. "In his head he has his kids at two years old. The boy he's nearly nine, the girl she's seven, and this one's almost three. He was two and a half when his daddy left. But he's got 'em all fixed in his mind at two years old and that's where he thinks they are."

I am looking at her incredulously. "You're kidding."

She shakes her head and I see the white of her eyes behind their glasses. "I ain't kidding. He liked 'em then,

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KAREN ALPHA lives in Corning, New York. This is her first published story.

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he could control 'em. So that's where he's keeping 'em in his head."

"That's weird. Hasn't he been to see somebody? Won't he go for help?"

"No, he don't see there's anything the matter. This last Christmas he give them all baby things, two year old things, little clothes and baby toys. She's seven and the boy he's nearly nine and they like more grown up things. Clothes and Fashion Barbie Dolls. But that's where he thinks they are. He said she, the one he's with, bought all those presents he give 'em and didn't I think that was so nice of her? They're both crazy."

I am nodding absolute assent.

"They say if I could get him away from her maybe they could get him straightened out. But he thinks he's perfectly all right. He's got to the point where he thinks nothing's the matter with him at all. But maybe if they could get him away from her they could straighten him out." She speaks as if he were a porch rail that had gone slightly askew over the winter.

"And they want my kids. I don't know what they'd do with 'em — they're always bragging about their precious freedom, and leaving her kids off with just anybody to go run around town. She lost her kids over my husband. She was declared unfit. He throws her baby, she's three years old, picks her up and throws her."

I blink. "Throws her? What do you mean, throws her?"

"Oh, at the wall, on the floor, anywhere. Just throws her. No sir, I'm very careful about my kids. I don't let just anybody with my kids. I've told him he can come see them any time of the day or night he wants, but they're not going there. No way in this world I'd let these kids go there. Doing things with the kids watching. He says it's natural, it's a perfectly natural thing to do; but I say there's some things not fit for kids to see. She's been brought up on charges already for that. And sodomy. In front of her kids."

I glance over at Anna with the proper look of horror, expecting to see it mirrored on her face, but instead there is nothing. Her face is a blank, there is no emotion in her voice, not even outrage, not even righteous satisfaction. She has been bled of anger and I will notice now for the remainder of our short acquaintance her monotonality, as if she is operating just over the edge of consciousness. Pain becoming its own anesthesia.

We drop Mark off at my friend's and continue across town to Anna's appointment, even though it would have been easier to first drop her off, the boy and I swinging by my friend's on my way home. I suggest this as a feasible alternative, not really expecting her to comply and she doesn't: "It's just me. Some say I'm too careful with my kids."

"I don't think it's possible to be too careful," I say. After all, she doesn't know me. I think perhaps I mentioned it only as some kind of small test.

"That Ellen is such a dear," she says as we drive away from my friend's.

I know that she and Ellen know each other from a sort of Divorcees Anonymous group they both belong to: when Ellen's husband left her, their four children, and their partially remodeled first floor not long ago for the arms of another, I was plainly amazed.

"I met up with her at La Leche when the baby was born," says Anna. And I think of course, what they both are above all else are mothers. Ellen has always been one of those blissful quintessential mothers with a baby on one hip and another at the breast. And now Anna. And my God, now that I think about it, how many others lately? I start counting in my mind my motherly friends who are suddenly single. The number mounts. Contrary to the feminist backlash crowd, devotion to family and home isn't going very far toward preserving the status quo these days after all. I find myself wanting to ask Dr. Freud another question: Just what is it men want? Perhaps someone they can sodomize in front of the children.

Anna is nervously cheerful when she steps out of the counsellor's office; she looks a bit excitable, her hair springing up in concert with the long strides of her lanky farmer's walk. "Looks like they might have something," she says as we come out into the lightly falling snow.

"I'm glad. Some way to help you deal with the children?"

It's her turn to stare at me blankly. Am I not supposed to know this? Is this too private? Does she really consider it unthinkable to be having difficulty with that one portion of her life she has felt safe in, could rely on keeping? Or was it merely a small misunderstanding—"worried about the children, unsure what to do . . ." meaning worry that her husband the villain would snatch the children from her ("I can't leave them with just anybody," she'd said, "can't leave them alone but for a minute else he'll charge improper supervision, can't take anything for my nerves at all"), was that it, that he could take them away too? Or even more threatening, that if he did somehow legally manage this, it would have to be with cause, it would have to be essentially her fault? No wonder she was unwilling to admit "a problem coping"—the pressure must be unbearable.

But this was absurd, what possible chance could he have? The man sounded to be a lunatic. Nevertheless he'd managed to worry Anna into a state of perpetual fear, and perhaps that was all he need do for the moment.

"Yep, they think they've got something," she repeats with evident satisfaction.

I have to know. "What's that," I say, "what have they got?"

"Something to use. On Sam. To get him committed. If they can get him committed against his will maybe they can get him straightened out, they think."

I can't help it, I get a chill. Wait a minute, whose side am I on? This woman sitting on my right becomes cheerful at the prospect of committing her husband. But what is he doing but the same thing? Perhaps that's the problem. My objective self is trying to see both sides of the question as is its logical impartial habit, while my emotional self is screaming You rotten male shit, you're leaving her with nothing, do you have to destroy her as well? And I realize that of course he does, else there might be a survivor left to eventually prove him wrong—and that would be unacceptable.

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As I work this out, weaving through the tangibly less problematic spiral of a slippery traffic circle, she says, "Of course I realize that even if they do get him back on the right track he still might not come back to us."

And I think, Omigod she'd take him back in a second. She's got the welcome-home-honey scene all worked out in her mind. It'll be just like before, come see what I made you for dinner, it'll be just like when we first got married.

Anna is saying, "I know he wants to come home, I have this kinda sixth sense about it, I just know. And I keep having this dream. He's on his way home. He's trying so hard to get home. He's driving that Blazer of his and it's a terrible night out, storming to beat the band, and he goes off the road and is lying there dead in that red Blazer. But his spirit raises up and keeps coming. He wants to get home so bad that it keeps coming until finally it gets to us. And then I wake up and see him sitting there in his chair right there where he always would sit, and I see him there looking at me for a long time. That's how bad he wants to come back. Even dead his spirit had to get here, that's how strong it was.

"No, I know I need to take care of myself, to eat right and keep from getting sick, but I ain't got much appetite and don't sleep so good either. Can't take anything to sleep, else all of a sudden I'm a dope addict. So I just see as these kids get fed, that's all, don't this one look neglected though! You know he turned me in, called up and reported me, said I was abusing these kids. I know it was him, he's the only one uses my real name—it's Ann not Anna—and then he calls up and reports me for cruelty to animals, and I get the state police there and I have to get a neighbor to write in that he sees me out there feeding the dog every day. And while the state police are there the protection officer comes and there's all this going on and he says he'll see me later. Yep, you sure look abused, you do, not a mark on you. Though these kids do bruise easy, bump something and they get a bruise I bruise easy too—always have—don't know why, being dark complected and all.

"But I don't dare to let these kids out of my sight, not for five minutes, not even to run up to the store or our little post office just up the road. Not without they come too. For fear somebody'll see and say they ain't getting proper supervision, they're neglected. He's got people watching round here; nobody wanting to be on his wrong side round here, no, that's for sure.

"Could we stop in the bank there for just a second so's I can get my food stamps, just take a second? Don't know when we be getting back up here, huh Buster?" She jostles the boy on her lap so he tilts back his head and looks up at her chin.

I say Sure and circle in front of the bank, my tires leaving black arcs in the undisturbed snow. There are not many people out today—the weather probably—and no one else in the lot. Mark and I sit quietly in the car waiting for Anna, Mark rolling the windows up and down, switching on the overhead light (and off and on); and I, released for a moment from driving and from the sound of her voice, realize I am holding my stomach muscles tight in preparation for a scream. And I make a promise to myself that the absolute second I drive away from them, alone, I will scream at my dashboard, scream until my middle unclenches the grip it has on my lower ribcage. I become calm, knowing it will not be long.

I am counting trailers on my left as I pass them so as to calculate which to pull up in front of when she cries out, "Oh God, the dog!" Her voice jumps up an octave and she squeaks, "Where's the dog, where's the dog? Oh no she's gone, God, she's gone!" Wailing in grief already, overcome, frantic. By the time I get the car stopped she's clawed the door open and is yelling at the top of her voice, "Heidi! Heidi! Oh no, Heidi!"

In answer a Siberian husky pokes its head from a doghouse near the other end of the trailer and then comes all the way out and sits down, watching us. "Oh!" sighs Anna. "Oh. But she's never once got in there through the day!" Her voice starts rising again in panic at the unknown factor.

"It's a wet snow," I say. "She didn't want to get wet."

Anna shakes her head, not accepting an explanation quite yet that precludes some kind of loss on her part, some expected, prepared-for loss. But apparently this is not yet it. She stands talking to me for a while with the boy in her arms, calming down. Finally I'm able to terminate the conversation, my portion of which had long since degenerated into a continual nod, and bolt.

But I forget to scream. Instead, I turn on the radio, look at the pretty snow in the pretty trees, stretch my eyes open, take deep breaths, hunch my shoulders to loosen up. And I listen to her voice that accompanies me still; I go over her words like a codebreaker searching for the clue that links theory to actuality, or at least some semblance of reliability: trying to decipher a marriage.

"Look, do I sound crazy to you? I mean, do I really? He wants us all to be friends—him and her and me. Says I'd like her if I get to know her. Hell, I know her now, knowed her for three years since he started seeing her the last time. When he left us he said he realized he loved her and that's why he'd been unhappy. Took him three years to figure that out. I told him she was a whore, said so to her face and she agreed with me. He thrashed me pretty bad that time. She agreed with me; she knows what she is. The kids don't want to go anywhere with them but he says they're too young to know their minds, it's just me turning them against him. He can come see them here any time of the night or day, anytime at all. The kids and me, we just wish we could tell what he'd do, just wish we could be certain. . . ."

The snow is falling more heavily now, making driving difficult. The sanding trucks have not been out yet and the snow lies thick and white on the highway; wet flake clumps ride across the windshield. I am concentrating on the road, especially the part about remaining on it, when I notice another car better equipped for this weather than I am coming up fast in the rearview.

Through the snow it looks to be red and jeep-like—like, well, a Blazer. As it pulls out to pass me I see in the side mirror that there are three men sitting shoulder to shoulder on the front seat and they are all grinning. A brief impression of a rising arm. I just have time to think: *Sam*, before they draw alongside and my mind flashes out, and

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my eyes watch the strange small red brains slide down the inside of my windshield in imitation of the wet white snow just outside.

For a few moments I can't be exactly certain. Until I see that they have actually passed me, until I see the red car wiggle its backside at me on the slippery road as if at some hilarious joke. I am amazed there is no splintered glass in my lap, nothing but snow running down the windshield; I reach out and touch the glass. I am driving quite normally down the highway, although a second ago I watched the insides of my head empty all over the interior of my car from a blast as real as the thought that triggered it.

The car ahead disappears into the blowing snow. I do not know who was in that car, nor does it matter for I am not now altogether sure I saw it. If it was Sam, he does not know me. If it was not, he does not know me. My windshield wipers seem to scrape clear a path and I continue into town. It's unusually cold and still in the car, sensationless as if inside a storage vault or a tiny airplane flying high in clouds. Nothing can touch me further. I go home and when I get there finally I weep for Anna. □

DEBORA GREGER

PIÈCE DE RÉSISTANCE

The china doll, too good for play,
spent its days on the wall.
I meant always to see if by night
the doll didn't slip from its nails,
stretch and hug itself, spin
itself dizzy on stiff legs,
and shake loose that painted smile.

But I missed nothing,
not even sleep. I found the cat
circling the feathers of petticoats,
pawing the pieces of a porcelain hand.
Now I could hold the doll, and name it,
the way I would let myself
be held years later by a man
who cared nothing for the past.

No, the way I held my mother once,
surprised by her small bones
and the weight of her tears.
Then her stern sleep divided the present
from the past which, like a man
who left, was never to be mentioned.

What am I talking about?
My father never left us.
There was no china doll.
There was someone at arm's length
from herself, not moving until now,
and even then, away.

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ANTHONY E. STOCKANES

THE MURDERER

At precisely 4:02 p.m. on May 27th, in the alley behind his house (the house looks shabby, a plain three-story apartment building, but maybe it only looks shabby because we don't have a color set; most apartments look shabby in black-and-white) Timothy Alden Fasnaught (a.k.a. Timmy-Tam-Tam) literally exploded the head of Neil Spodecker. All things considered—the distance, the weight of the weapon (a .357 Magnum)—it was creditable marksmanship . . . but woeful timing

because

only two months before, the state legislature passed, after only desultory debate, S-321.

We watch Walter Cronkite telling us this. My wife says he is showing his age. I wish he would clear his throat. I hope he isn't developing IT; I remember Ed Murrow and he had that same scratchy sound. My wife says Murrow smoked cigarettes, but Walter Cronkite—somehow we always use his full name: Walter Cronkite; never "Walter," never "Cronkite"—smokes a pipe. Cancer of the lip is what pipe smokers have to watch out for. We lean forward and try to detect a discoloration of the lip but with the mustache it's hard to tell. It would be easier to see if we had color.

S-321. The first meaningful attempt to reform the criminal justice code. The work of Claude R. Defenbaugh (R-Ossippa) and Warren G. Dombinski (D-Coover Wells). Surprisingly succinct, it originally contained only four terse provisions. Article 4, dealing with rapists, was reluctantly deleted by the sponsors when house-senate conferees could not reach a compromise on language, the upper house holding out for a no-nonsense "cut off their testicles" while their junior colleagues insisted on the stern but comparatively bland "de-ball them."

My wife says that sometimes, when he holds his head a certain way, David Brinkley looks like Herb Klein.

With the removal of Article 4, the bill zipped through final passage and the governor promptly signed it and gave the pens to Claude R. Defenbaugh (R-Ossippa) and Warren G. Dombinski (D-Coover Wells).

We cannot see if the governor actually uses both pens when he signs the bill. They always put the names on the screen in white letters. Sometimes it's hard to read if you don't have color and the person is wearing a light suit. They should use black letters for light suits and white letters for dark suits. We are watching the signing months after it happened and so their suits are for the wrong season. My wife says maybe the weather is different there.

The press immediately dubbed S-321 the Def-and-Dom Law. Or maybe someone who didn't like the bill called it that and the press only reported it. Sometimes, if Jeffie is playing with a noisy toy, it is distracting and it is hard to tell whether Eric Sevareid is telling us what he thinks about something or whether he is telling us what he thinks about what someone else thinks about something.

Both supporters and opposition agreed the Def-and-Dom Bill was a concise marvel. No parole for nobody no time for no reason. Mandatory—*stiff* mandatory—sentences for every crime except election fraud. And Article 3, the very cornerstone of the bill: juveniles to be treated as adults when they commit serious crime. "Serious" is not defined.

We are watching on a weekend and so Walter Cronkite is not at his desk. His replacement says "serious" crimes don't include sniggering embezzlement, jocular stock fraud. My wife says that's funny, but I don't think so. That's editorializing and the man should replace Rod McLeish and not Walter Cronkite if he wants to say that. Maybe he thinks not too many people watch on weekends and he can get away with it.

Every night every channel has something to say about Timothy Alden Fasnaught and S-321.

"He's only five years old!" someone says.

"Timothy—Alden—Fasnaught," says an assistant state's attorney, "committed a heinous crime."

Someone from the ACLU says, "He's only five years *old*!"

Someone from the Committee for Concerned Conservative Citizens says, "Little Neil was only four-and-a-*half*!"

My wife asks me what ever became of Connie Chung.

Morley Safer talks to a man in New Hampshire who belongs to TAG which stands for Take Away Guns on *60 Minutes*. The man's name is Milton Speransky and he only has a stub of an index finger because the rest was shot away by an imbecilic Volvo mechanic and he walks with a limp because his kneecap was shattered when he went out on his porch to pick up the morning paper and a hunter mistook him for a six-point deer. He says it's time to confiscate firearms. "Timmy-Tam-Tam is the real victim here," he says.

My wife says Morley Safer is Canadian. I tell her that is not quite correct, that he is American now because you have to be a citizen to be on national television. My wife says Canadians think they are Americans and I agree I should have said U.S. American instead of just American.

"Nonsense," says A. Fallon Boyd, a spokesman for the NRA. "Magnums don't kill people, toddlers kill people."

In a heated debate on whether Timothy Alden Fasnaught should be executed, James Kilpatrick loosens two

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of Shana Alexander's teeth because she is biting his ear lobe and rumpling his hair. His tie is also ripped. It is hard to tell who starts it.

My wife says that it's rehearsed, that Shana and Jack are really good friends. She reminds me that Buff Cobb and Mike Wallace used to argue on the radio and Cher picked on Sonny. I point out that they are divorced now. Yes, she says, but Steve Allen and Jayne Meadows *seem* to argue and they're still married. She wonders what Dan Rather's wife looks like.

Six Japanese terrorists hijacked a charter flight from Minneapolis to Monaco and demanded forty million dollars in small bills, five Colonel Sanders light lunches, an Arby Beef 'n' Cheese and the release of Timmy-Tam-Tam in exchange for their hostages.

We watch the plane sitting on the runway in Teheran. Whenever they take pictures of hijacked planes from a distance there always seems to be a heat shimmer on the picture. My wife says it may be our set, but I don't think so. When they show the President's plane there isn't any heat shimmer.

Marvin Kalb said *Pravda* and *Izvestia* published full-page front-page denunciations of the "criminal criminal justice system of the bourgeois capitalistic child-killers," drew correlations between the death of Neil Spodecker, the execution of Private Slovik, the murders of Sacco and Vanzetti, and U.S. investments in Costa Rica. Marvin Kalb said informed State Department sources feel this indicates a hardening attitude in a sharply divided Politburo as a result of the stalled SALT talks.

My wife says Marvin Kalb has the best hair on television and reminds me that Jeffie needs a haircut.

North Vietnam demanded the immediate dispatch of a United Nations delegation and also renewed calls for three billion dollars in war reparations.

My wife wonders if Richard C. Hottelet has to go to all the U.N. meetings or only when there's something important. I think he probably goes every day, but I don't think he's there at the *start* every day.

Weekend devoted the whole show to Timmy-Tam-Tam products. Timmy-Tam-Tam T-shirts at $5.95 were out-selling Timmy-Tam-Tam cereal bowls, Timmy-Tam-Tam lunch boxes and Timmy-Tam-Tam coloring books. Little Neil products were not doing as well, but company spokesmen said business would pick up with Christmas sales. Mattel's Timmy-Tam-Tam Sure-Shot Pistol was leading the "active toy" market while Parker Brothers "Alley" was well ahead of "Monopoly" in the "passive" market. "Alley" was a board-and-dice game (two to six players) in which the object was to get to Assassin Alley to "eradicate" Nasty Neil without stopping at any penalty squares. If you landed on a penalty square you had to draw a card which might send you to bed without your supper for two turns, have you run over by a bus (a green bus: lose two turns; a red bus: Player Is Out; a yellow bus: Player goes back ten squares) or be trampled to death by the Mayor of Cleveland.

ANTHONY E. STOCKANES lives in Urbana, Illinois, and announces that he is not working on a novel, nor does he own color television.

My wife says she doesn't like Lloyd Dobyns because he doesn't wear a shirt or tie. I'm not sure. It seems all right after you get used to it.

An ABC News Update Special showed all the musicians doing songs about Timmy-Tam-Tam and Neil and showed Waylon Jennings singing "Li'l Neil Ain't Gonna Drink His Milk Tonight" and Kiss singing "Timmy-Tamm-ZAPP-Tam" in front of colored lights and a lot of smoke and a record playing on a juke box while the sound track played the 101 Strings' "Themes From Violins and Magnums: Music for Nap-Time." Two young men in dark glasses said they were doing a rock opera, but Barry Manilow said he had no present plans to work on the material.

Charles Kuralt interviewed Otis Linstrom, the man who outbid Larry Schiller for the rights to the Timmy-Tam-Tam story, at his home in Vermont. Mr. Linstrom said it was a combination of luck and preparation. He said you had to be at the right place at the right time, but if you were lucky and were in the right place at the right time and not somewhere else you had to be prepared to take advantage of it. The camera showed Charles and Mr. Linstrom standing by the pump in Mr. Linstrom's back yard. Charles said the sugar maples in the quiet Vermont village were changing in the first chill nights of autumn, but it was hard to see any change in black-and-white.

A spiritualist in Bayonne, New Jersey, said she had been visited by the astral presence of Neil Spodecker. She said Neil was wearing a blood-stained pair of blue corduroy bibbed pants and he said he was happy and the world would end on June 13, but his voice faded before he told her the year.

My wife says that sometimes, when she holds her head a certain way, Lesley Stahl looks like Gloria Steinem.

Angry mobs hurled stones at the U.S. embassies in Paris and Madrid. Disgruntled mobs hurled invective at the U.S. embassies in Stockholm and Bonn. An apathetic mob shuffled outside the U.S. embassy in London. Two placard-bearing pickets strolled along the road outside the consulate offices in Port-au-Prince. On the placards, "Timmy," "Neil," and "atrocity" were misspelled.

My wife says it's strange but she's never seen Neil Strawser's face before. She's just heard him on the radio. She's right. He looks like his voice, though.

Idi Amin expelled the beheaded body of an Anglican book dealer and had the dealer's inventory thrown into a pit of crocodiles. It was hard to see the crocodiles. Maybe the set *is* finally giving up.

A consumer-protection group issued a report on the severe damage to ligaments in the arm and shoulder inherent in the firing of a .357 Magnum. A company spokesman angrily denied the charge and pointed out that optional gun-rests in Moroccan leatherette were available. A spokesman for HEW said Medicaid would not cover the costs of the gun-rests.

Mr. Fasnaught was shown many times, standing in front of his apartment with the wind blowing his hair and a microphone held in front of his face. He said he kept the .357 Magnum for protection. On *Meet the Press* Timmy-Tam-Tam's mother sat next to Neil Spodecker's mother and said she hoped some good would come of it all. On

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Face the Nation Mrs. Spodecker sat next to Mrs. Fasnaught and said she felt no bitterness toward no one. Someone asked her if her husband felt the same way and she said she thought so but she couldn't be sure because she hadn't seen him since August of '75.

My wife says George Herman never seems to get any older.

A caucus of prominent black business and church leaders held a press conference to announce they had figures to prove that literally countless five-year-old minority children maimed and murdered their playmates with little or no fuss raised. Their spokesman, the Rev. W. Abner Washington, said, "America, when are we going to realize we cannot survive as a nation with this odious double standard? How long—how *long*—are we as a *people* going to tolerate this rank—yes, I say *rank*—discrimination against a whole generation? Right now—right *now*—there are areas in our metropolitan urban cities where black children no less bright, no less industrious, no less deserving than Timothy Fasnaught have never even seen a .38 Colt Special let alone a point three and seventy-five Magnum. Right now—right *now*—right here in Philadelphia there are places where you will find nothing more potent than a .22. . . ."

I think because of Ed Bradley's beard a lot more reporters will start wearing them, but my wife says he wears it because a lot of blacks have bumpy, pimply areas on their cheeks.

A delegation from NOW called for equality, saying that in Terre Haute, Indiana, Ms. Becky Rabisniak, a scant month older than Timmy-Tam-Tam, had parboiled her infant brother, Norton, and not much had been said about it. "Surely," the spokesperson said, "we are demanding nothing more than simple justice. Since Lizzie Borden, the American woman has been sadly neglected. And even Ms. Borden was more an object of ridicule than revulsion. For too long we have had to be content with tokenism, an occasional reference to Winnie Ruth Judd and Ruth Snyder. . . ."

My wife says that sometimes, when he holds his head a certain way, John Chancellor looks like her father. I think that's because most people who wear glasses look like most other people who wear glasses if you look at them in a certain way.

Timmy-Tam-Tam's lawyer said Timmy was a model prisoner and seemed to be bearing up all right under the strain and had helped extensively in drafting the appeal. He said plans for a movie were premature, but admitted an animated feature had "moved beyond the planning stage." However, he said, to protect his client's rights he would have nothing to say at this time.

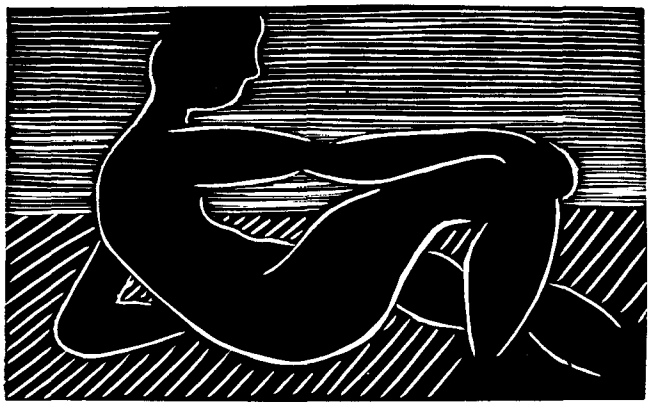
In an unprecedented action, the Supreme Court conducted its sessions during prime time and allowed live television coverage, not only of the appeal arguments themselves, but of the court's deliberations, a process lasting sixteen hours and climaxing in a shouting match so loud the two eldest members were awakened. The cameras zoomed in as the Chief Justice, speaking for the 5-4 majority, said the death penalty was not, in letter or spirit, cruel and unusual for a five-year-old. Putting aside his notes, he looked straight into the cameras and, in an emotion-packed voice, said, "I say, good riddance. If my daughter's children had been given a good jolt when they were five, our little Estelle wouldn't be in a home in Nevada at this very moment!"

My wife thinks Fred Graham wears a hair-piece, because his hair-line seems lower, but I'm not sure.

In *TV Guide* a reviewer said the Chief Justice's sobbing collapse was the most effective media reporting since Frank Costello's hands and the Munich Olympics. "Television finally came of age," she wrote, "doing what television does best."

A senator from Wyoming said he would introduce legislation to make the Def-and-Dom bill a model for a national law.

My wife says when Jeffie is a little older she'd like to drive out to Wyoming if it wasn't so far. I say: "When Jeffie is a little older, it won't be any closer," and she laughs and says that is a good line. She calls her mother and tells her what she said and then what I said and when she comes back she says her mother thought it was a funny thing to say. She also says her mother thinks her picture tube's going because she's getting a lot of fade and the picture slants and jiggles even when a plane isn't going overhead. It sounds like a picture tube, but it may only be one of the holds.



Close-Up interviewed the cook at the prison and he said for his last meal Timmy-Tam-Tam had requested hot dogs, smashed potatoes, potato chips, and a jumbo Coke.

We didn't get Jeffie any Timmy-Tam-Tam or Little Neil toys. Frankly, we thought they were too steep. We got him a tank that runs on batteries. It makes a growly noise when the treads turn and the turret revolves and the cannon spits sparks. He promised to play with it in his room, but sometimes he forgets.

Eyewitness interviewed the chaplain and he said Timmy-Tam-Tam had shown no remorse for his crime.

It could have been our Jeffie, my wife says.

Who? I say.

Either one of them, she says, and I say that we have only one son and she says, no, I mean Neil or Timmy.

We watch Jeffie watching television. It's something to think about. He's about due for another haircut.

The warden seemed heavy, but television makes people appear fatter than they are. Sometimes Carol Burnett looks a little dumpy. The warden said,

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". . . well, yes, getting him up in the chair was a problem at first. We had a run-through last night and he didn't fit at all. But we jacked him up on a couple of telephone directories and he fit just fine." Johnny asked if it would hurt and the warden said, "No, not at all. The first thing, we pop him with 2300 volts—that's just what it takes to brown your toast in the morning—and he won't feel a thing."

My wife says Johnny and Ed McMahon really don't like each other at all, that they never get together socially after the show.

They interrupted the Rams-Bears game with the Bears trailing 3 to zip with only 27 seconds to go to the half and the Bears on the Rams' seventeen to announce that Timmy-Tam-Tam was gone and that there would be a special program at 11:30 EST after the local news. I heard they got a lot of static about that because the Bears scored during the interruption.

My wife says she's glad they didn't show it on television and I kind of agree with her because of the commercials, but I think PBS could have handled it O.K. □

JOHN MORGAN

THE REFUGEE

(In memory of Roethke; in memory of Neruda)

At times the frantic anger of monkeys rips through my face
and it's scattered like garbage along the roadside,
bags and bottles and random packs emptied
of cigarettes light up the bushes,—
and oh, what reclusive fear shames my reflection,
makes me punish the gas pedal
and take sharp curves at a desperate speed,
blurring this beautiful country,
beautiful, but so fragile?

I recall two planets
that sat in the early sky
against the blue pane of morning
redeeming a night of sleeplessness and trembling,
two poets at a great distance, I thought,
who wished me luck. Now I shiver for them.

The reservoirs are full, the hills green with summer,
but daily the road-crews come out
with their half-tracks, their steel
pachyderms, and take the land to pieces.
Already our show is folding, earth's body's
cold, bone brittle
under a mirthless contraction; so it is
that the refugee puts slashes of color in front of his human
shape, embittered by losses he can't defend,
though not alone for love, and in his own country.

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BARBARA L. BEYER

ASHES

He was a pretty child, Gena thought, staring at the tiny figure in the crib, but she hadn't liked to hold him, hadn't liked to feed him. She knew mothers who enjoyed holding and feeding their babies. She'd thought she would, but they made her nervous. All of them. All four. Even Joey. No matter now. The question now was what to do with them before Jake got home. She had all day. It was only ten o'clock. Smothering them hadn't taken long, not even as long as she'd allowed. She'd put the pillow over the baby while he slept, then called the other three in from the TV one by one to dress them, holding each one in turn close against her breast while she applied the pillow. "Let's play a game," she'd said.

Jake could cook his own dinner. She had told him last night. "I decided you were right. I do need a rest. The children and I can go to Sue's and be back Friday evening before the party." "Great," he'd said and gone back to his paper. Just like that. No fuss; no bother. Jake liked a quiet house.

She had been softening the dirt in the back corner of the yard for three weeks. She got the shovel out of the store room and went out. She knelt in the grass and removed the tomato plants from the soft earth, laying each one carefully on the pieces of newspaper beside her. Then she began to dig. She had only been able to work the earth down for three feet, but thought that should be enough for the small bodies. She'd buried the dog that way. The bed was eleven feet long. She would lay them head to toe. She'd measured Johnny and Joey and little Suzie against the kitchen door frame yesterday. Their combined height was less than ten feet. And the baby was no problem. At his checkup last week he was only twenty-two inches. She laid newspapers along the grass to hold the fresh dirt. Jake wouldn't be suspicious, of course, but there was no need to give him any reason to be hosing extra earth into the grass. She'd water all the beds before she left. He'd have no reason to be fooling around in the yard when he got home.

Maybe she would cook his supper before she left. She could make a meat loaf. He could have a hot supper and meat loaf sandwiches for the rest of the week. That's what she would do. She felt better. Feeding him was the least she could do.

She jammed her foot against the shovel and looked at the long bed against the fence. She had only taken about two feet out so far. The sun was getting hot. Well, she'd just have to work faster. She brushed her hair out of her eyes and looked at the tomato plants. They were getting limp. She picked them up and carried them to the side of the carport, setting them in the shade of the honeysuckle. She wished Jake would help her rip out the vine. They had worked hard to get it started, but she'd hated it ever since they found the snake. She'd screamed, and Jake had laughed at her. "It's only a bull snake," he'd said when he killed it. "But how am I supposed to know?" She hated him when he laughed at her. It was the same brown color as a rattler. She'd expected a rattlesnake ever since Jake's mother had told her how to kill one. "Don't be afraid," she'd said, "if you find a rattlesnake just get Jake's twenty-two. The snake will line up with the barrel when he gets ready to strike. You can't miss." Maybe so, but Gena never wanted to find out. She hadn't even learned to look at Joey's horned toad. "Rub his stomach, Mama," he'd said, holding the gray creature stomach-up in his palms. "Get that thing out of this house. This instant." His eyes had clouded, and she'd tried to make amends. "You can keep him in the cactus bed." He'd cried the next morning when it was gone. She was glad today was her last in South Texas. She'd spend the rest of her life in the city, a northern city with so much cold and so many people, there'd be no snakes or horned lizards, no scorpions in her kitchen. She dug harder, heaving shovel after shovel of the gray earth onto the paper.

"Gena." She turned as the cedar gate opened behind her. It was Arlene. "What on earth are you doing!" Her neighbor walked across the lawn. "You've been planting those tomatoes for a week. I thought you had them in last night."

Gena threw another shovel of dirt on the paper. "I did, but Jake brought home some fertilizer last night." She wiped her hands on her jeans. "You know how men are. You won't mind adding this to the soil tomorrow," she mimicked. "Of course not, I am your servant, oh master."

Arlene laughed. "You sure are a glutton for punishment." She sat down in the children's swing, her hips flabbing over the edges of the board.

"Maybe so, but you have to admit this house doesn't look like any ten others in the plan since we started working on it." It didn't either. They'd changed the patio to a den, planted citrus trees, added the cedar fence. But there was too much they couldn't change, and Gena thought she'd still be glad to go.

Arlene stopped swinging. "You need a break. I'll go in and fix us each a cup of coffee."

"No!" Gena exclaimed. Arlene looked surprised, and

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she added: "The children are asleep. Besides I rearranged my cabinets last night. I'll have to hunt the coffee can."

"Suit yourself. You're a glutton for punishment."

When she got inside, her stomach was quivering. She took two aspirin and made two cups of instant coffee. Arlene liked sugar so she put the two cups and a spoon on a tray with the sugar bowl and carried them outside, "Service, Madam, would you care for one lump or two?"

"One, but with cream. Never mind, I'll get it. You can't have hidden your refrigerator."

There was nothing for Gena to do but hold the tray and wait for her to return.

"Boy, it's quiet in there. How'd you get them all down for a morning nap?"

"They stayed up late last night. We had company." She surprised herself with her ready answers. But she should have counted on Arlene's visit and hadn't. She swallowed the last of her coffee. "You don't mind my going on with this bed, I hope. I want to get those plants in before they wilt too badly."

"It's your back, friend. I'll just sit here while I don't have to fight Johnny for his swing." She pushed herself high in the air. "I never grow up. Hey, I can see over the fence. Fred says I'll be a child when I'm eighty." She laughed. "He usually means because I'm so nosy, though."

Gena dug another foot while her neighbor talked. She wished Arlene would leave. It was impossible to work as fast when she had company as she could alone. She turned over a fat white grub with a shovel full of dirt. She jabbed the shovel blade and severed him. Green oozed onto the pile of dirt.

"Good heavens you're vicious. You ought to spread some poison in there while you're at it."

"I know," she gritted her teeth and heaved another spadeful of dirt onto the pile, "Maybe Jake will bring some home this evening. Then I can do this all over again tomorrow. No, he can do it tomorrow. I'm going to Sue's for a few days."

"Lucky you. Is your mother-in-law going to keep the children?"

"Are you kidding?" Jake's mother had told her after the first one, "I raised my seven. You handle your own." At least she didn't interfere. Gena wondered if she'd have felt differently if she'd had someplace to leave the children occasionally. It would have been nice sometimes. She supposed it wouldn't have mattered. It was funny, too. She had really wanted children. She wanted them all through the first pregnancy, right up until the time Johnny cried and her breasts started flowing, and she couldn't make them stop, and she stood naked dripping circles of milk on the carpet while Jake laughed. She could still hear the laugh. He laughed too when she complained about his sleeping at night when she had to get up with them. She hated his sleeping, and her not able to. Even with her head stuffed under a pillow, she couldn't sleep with one of them crying. "Mother instinct," the doctor said. They made her an animal, she hated it. Hated the loss of control. Then with four of them, all under four years, howling at her heels, there'd been no control at all. She had control now, digging the dirt and talking to Arlene.

"I know," Arlene said, still talking about the grubs, "I think Fred has some Dieldrin in the garage. That stuff will kill anything. I'll get it for you. You can pay us back later."

"I'll come with you." Maybe she could leave Arlene at home if she got the poison herself.

She returned alone. By not stopping for lunch she was through digging by two o'clock. Not as early as she had planned but not bad. She sprinkled the Dieldrin in the long trench, then went to the store room for the lime. The sack was almost empty. "Damn!" Jake had spread it on the lawn Sunday. She was going to get some yesterday. She carried what was there to the trench and sprinkled it on the bottom. It hardly covered the earth. Maybe Arlene would have some. It was too late to go to town now.

Arlene didn't. "We're out." She was wiping the suds off her wrists. "Look at this mess. My washer overflowed while I was gabbing this morning. I was so mad I didn't even stop to clean it up. I better get it done before Fred comes though."

"I won't keep you then," Gena said, turning to go.

"Why don't you get ashes. That's mostly lime."

"We don't have a fireplace."

"We don't either. Get them out back on the bone pile."

The bone pile. She remembered seeing the pile of ashes and bones beneath a mesquite behind the house one day when Joey had gotten out of the fence. "Do you think it would work?"

"Sure, Fred uses them all the time. We have two piles behind our house. This whole development was part of the ranch up until five years ago, you know."

"Thanks, thanks very much." Her steps were fast. She wondered if there would be enough ashes in the lime to hurry the disintegration. She wished she'd paid more attention to her college chemistry.

She found the pile of ashes and bones behind the fence and knocked the charred bones to one side. She pushed three wheelbarrow loads into the yard and dumped them in the trench.

"Leave room for the dirt," Arlene called through her kitchen window when Gena went by with her third load. Gena puffed and waved at her. This time when she went through the gate, she locked it behind her. She was alone in her walled garden.

Gena put half the ashes into the trench before she went inside to get the children. She brought Johnny first. She had dressed them in their Sunday outfits, and she thought again how pretty each one looked. Johnny had on the white suit Jake's mother had made him for Easter. It was his favorite, and she had marveled at how clean he kept it. It was a shame to get it dirty now. She scattered the gray powder over him. Ashes to ashes. Then she added Joey. Dust to dust. After Suzie, she discovered she didn't have room for the baby. She sat down in the swing and stared at the children, trying to think. She'd been so

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careful. She'd measured each one. "Damn!" She whispered and closed her eyes. Maybe she could stack the two smallest ones. No, the trench was too shallow already. She began replacing the soil, trying to think. She'd read in the paper about a service station attendant finding a baby in the toilet. That was too risky though. The other baby had apparently been born there, dropped into the commode. It couldn't be identified. She'd remembered because she'd wondered what sort of nerve the mother must have had to sit there and not cry out. Self preservation was a strong instinct.

When the trench was filled she sprinkled the last bits of ashes on the top, replanted the tomatoes and scattered the extra dirt the full length of the flower beds. Then she turned the sprinkler on and went inside to start the meatloaf.

She mixed the hamburger with the eggs and seasoning, mashing it together between her fingers. No one ever knew what hamburger had been, she thought. You just took the butcher's word for it. She wondered if human meat could pass for beef. Would you grind this small package for me, Sir? She pounded the meat flat, then shaped it into a loaf pan. It was three-thirty. She only had forty-five minutes. She set the oven to come on when Jake got home. His dinner would be ready by five. She made a salad and set it in the refrigerator. Then she pinned a note above the sink telling him where to look for his dinner.

Now, she thought, what to do about the baby. She began taking some of her clothes out of the large suitcase. She would just have to put him in there until she could do better. She didn't need the extra dresses anyway.

She put the three suitcases in the trunk of the car before she turned off the sprinkler. If the grass was very wet, Jake wouldn't walk in it tonight. He'd be mad at her for sprinkling the tomatoes instead of ground watering them, but maybe they'd be dry before he noticed. Besides, she wasn't the gardener, he was. She picked out the few bleached cow bones that had surfaced during the sprinkling. That's it! She stared at the bits of white in her hand. These piles were all over the country. If she could get far enough away from town. She remembered the dirt road where she had gone with Jake to see about a hunting lease. It was at least twenty miles from a human being except in deer season. The cow tank had its own pump even. There'd be piles there.

She checked the house once more to be sure she hadn't left anything she'd need. Then she stuck a box of matches in her jeans pocket and started the car.

By five o'clock she was leaving the main road west of Falfurrias. She followed the white caliche for a few more miles then turned into a narrower double rutted lane. It was just as she had remembered. She parked the car by the windmill, leaving the suitcase in the trunk and carrying the baby under one arm and the bundle of dirty newspapers under the other. She'd almost forgotten them. If she hadn't needed something to start the fire she would have. She walked through the brush feeling the thorns through her jeans. Everything in South Texas was either thorned or poisonous.

She found the spot she wanted by a clump of prickly pear still marked with singe from the heat. Setting the baby on a clump of grass, she rumpled the newspapers over the pile of white bones. She kicked the steer's skull out of the way and set the baby on top of the paper. Then she lit a match. The fire caught on the first try, and she sat down to watch. She could leave nothing but ashes and white bones. She set the extra newspaper beside her, proud of herself for thinking to reserve some in case the fire went out. At first the flame was pretty. It created a rosy glow around the baby, and Gena was fascinated. Then when the skin began to blister and pop, and the smell became very bad, she had to go back to the car to wait. She hoped she wouldn't have to wait long. She could see the smoke above the tops of the mesquite trees and wondered how far away it was noticeable. She had heard tales of poachers who disappeared on the ranches and were never heard from again. A noise in the brush startled her. It was a rabbit. Silly, she told herself, to jump at a little cottontail. The isolation was what she needed. It was stupid to be scared by the very conditions that worked to her advantage. She wished she had brought a piece of the newspaper to read. She watched a cow push its way to the tank and drink. It was a Santa Gertrudis. The King Ranch had populated the whole countryside with their cattle. She'd taken Sue out there once to see the huge headquarters. She wished she were at Sue's house now but it was better not to go. Arlene had been enough company.

Gena was tired. The smoke was gone, and she started back toward the site to check. Maybe it was over. She hoped so. There was still flesh smouldering on the pyre. She needed a hotter fire and looked around for fallen limbs. She piled them Girl Scout fashion over the shriveled body, poked more newspaper between the limbs, and set the fire once more. This time she took an extra paper back to the car to read.

An hour later she knocked the small skull to one side and crushed it with her foot. She was surprised at how easily it powdered. Kicking the remains back onto the pile, she burned the rest of the newspaper. Then she kicked the larger skull back on top of the pile of ashes.

Satisfied, she turned once more toward the car. Maybe she'd try Minneapolis. She'd cashed Jake's check yesterday. The money should take her to Minneapolis. She hadn't paid any of the bills out of it, and with careful spending she should have a couple of weeks to look for a job.

She didn't hear the rattle, but when she felt the blow in her ankle she knew what it was. It stunned her, and there was a second blow before she could react. She looked down at the tiny tongue flickering in the twilight. It was funny, she didn't feel anything more in her leg, but her heart began to close and open, close and open as if to rush the venom faster through her body. Her first impulse was to run, but no, she knew better than that. She told herself to stay calm, made herself walk back to the car. She made a tourniquet out of a bra, but there wasn't any sharp object. Nothing to endanger the children. They didn't even keep a bottle opener. Nothing to cut the wound. Her leg was numb now. She looked at the cow tank. It was a circle of galvanized steel. She limped over to it. The rim was smooth. It was new. Beside it lay a strip of barbed wire.

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Gena sat on the cool earth beside the tank while she tried to force the barbed wire into her flesh. When she bit her tongue in pain, she stuck a stick between her teeth and gouged at the wound again. Finally both spots were bleeding. She couldn't get her mouth to her ankle so she mashed against the wounds forcing the poisonous blood from her body. She was dipping her hand into the water to wash the wounds when she saw the lights reflecting off the side of the tank. They were still moving, but they were heading toward the tank. Crouching in the shadow, she circled the tank and ran through the brush toward the baby. Mesquite and prickly pear scratched her face and arms. She tried to throw herself over the ashes, but the heat was too much. The instinct for self preservation. She thought of the girl in the service station. Crouched in the cactus she could hear the doors slam on the pickup, and voices carrying in the night air.

"Naw. It's some kid poaching again. Check the tank, and we'll get him. Better yet, sit and wait. Catch him with the goods. Let him sweat it out, out in the brush awhile."

To Gena her own breathing came louder than the voices, and her head was numbing. She vomited. A long brown shadow crawled toward the ashes and coiled itself in the warmth at the edge of the pyre. She watched the snake, wondering if they had met earlier. Her leg cramped, heartbeats slowed, and her eyelids began to drop. She vomited again. This time into her own lap.

It was no good. She tried to stand. She'd get back to the car and take her chances. She looked at the snake. He had stretched his length out in the warmth of the ashes. Picking up a forked stick she'd gathered for the fire, she limped toward the brown body, and not until she had the fork firmly in the ground behind his head, did she think about something to kill him with. The tongue was darting in and out of the pinned brown triangle, and the long tail whipped about her legs as he tried to coil himself around the stick. She stood watching the whipping body, her fear overcome by her hatred. She wondered how long it took a snake to tire.

"Hey, George, come see what I found."

"Blood?" There was a low murmur. "It heads off in the brush yonder."

"I guess you better get the gun, and let's have a look."

"Over here," she called. "I've pinned a rattler."

They killed it with an ax before they looked at her, questioning, "What in tarnation. . . ."

"He bit me," she explained.

"That was still a durn fool thing to do," the one named George said after he examined the bites, but his eyes showed admiration. "Not many women would go after a snake like that. How long ago did he bite you?"

"About an hour."

"You're walking on it purty good. Reckon you bled the poison out by now, but all the same we'll get Bud here to drive you in to Doc Franklin and let him take a look."

"Thanks, but I'm just going to Hebronville. I'll catch a doctor there. My husband will be worried if I don't show pretty soon." That should get her out of here and take care of any ideas they might have, she thought. They looked like a couple of harmless ranch hands, but you never could tell.

"You oughten to wait that long. Doc Franklin's right on the main road. He won't hold you back none. Bud can drive you in your car, and I'll pick him up later."

She had to get out of here. "Maybe I'll stop if he's in. I can drive now." She walked around to prove her ability. Her leg throbbed. "No need to mess up your plans here."

George took his hat off and ran his fingers through the thin hair. "We do have a calf to doctor. Snake got him night before last. You stop though. Snake bite's nothin' to fool around with."

"I know. Thanks for the help." His eyes still held a question as if he were mulling it over in his mind trying to find the polite words.

"Ma'am, I . . ."

"I'm sorry to be on your land, but there aren't any service stations on the back roads. Restrooms . . ."

He reddened. "No, Ma'am. They ain't," he mumbled, dropping his gaze and jamming a worn boot heel into the gray earth. She watched the boot freeze, saw his gaze register the heat still rising from the ashes, saw his eyes meet the eyes of his friend, then narrow back to her face. "You been burning something?"

The friend picked up the stick still lying beside the snake and poked among the smouldering remains. Finding nothing but ashes and bones, he dropped it.

"Just some newspaper," she murmured, dropping her eyes. Four boots pointed their scarred toes toward her. "I didn't want to leave a mess," she added softly, and the boots began to shift.

"Oh," George said. He began to shove against the dirt once more, raising little puffs of gray about his feet.

Southern gentlemen. She smirked, knowing she was saved. "I was cleaning up," she said. She watched George. His hands were turning the brim of his straw Stetson. "I know this is a ranch, but it's different with cattle," she added.

"Ma'am," George began. Using the brim of the hat, he concentrated on dusting the grime out of his jeans. "We better get you back on the road."

She watched his face, but saw only the flush. Suspicion was gone. "I wouldn't have said anything, but you asked," she said.

"Yes, Ma'am. I understand." The flush deepened. "Let's get you back to the car."

They helped her into the car. "You stay on the main roads after this," George cautioned. Bud followed her as far as the ranch gate in his pickup, pointing out the way to Falfurrias.

"Be sure you stop by and let Doc Franklin take a look at that leg, now. He's on the right as you go into town. You can't miss him."

"I'll do that," she said and thanked him again. He stood until she had crossed the cattle guard and turned out onto the road. She watched him in the rear view mirror, but he closed the gate behind her, then turned the pickup back toward the windmill.

When she reached the hard surface once more, she didn't hesitate, but turned north, away from Falfurrias. Her brain was clear, the numbing sensation only faint in her leg. It was nine o'clock. She would spend the night in San Antonio. She'd be there before midnight. □

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Robert Dana:

"It's not enough to be good . . ."

— James Baldwin

1.
It's always the same

These swelters of brick or boards
The humid tons of air
Metallic breath of ancient drains

In the kitchen
Flies cruise the centuries of unwashed dishes
Cops cruise the streets

Your third floor Thirties apartment
taken for space and sleeping porches
decays visibly month by month

But your green plants thrive
in this north light

And the moon of your white face
is still beautiful

2.
After supper
we walk to the bakery
for rolls and black strong bread

or to the laundromat
where our colors gasp and collapse like television
in the rented glass
of washer doors

The neighborhood
sweats on its dark stoops

Teasing
or pussy-maddened
or weirdo delinquent junkies on a glassy high

In the occasional swing
of headlights
the features of an obscene photograph

where feeling
is the jagged edge of thought

the body
all that keeps us alive

3.
Dead black
of morning

And we wake
to the rich burn of ozone
and the distant low batteries of thunder

Lightning
freaks the roaches
from the bedroom floor

I tell you
how sometimes I imagine myself
an enemy soldier

Summer storms
as artillery shelling the city

Naked on the bed

we talk about
whether you think of yourself
as beautiful

about your girlhood

your older sister
who is unhappy

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NINETY-ONE IN THE SHADE

The rain has begun to fall

Clicking in the leaves
beside the window

Puddling the rutted alleys

Then
whistling through the screens
scouring the sills

it monsoons
into the empty streets

cold and foot-wringing

until our windows blur
like the stunned windows in a dream

the endless succession of rented rooms
in which nobody lives

4.
Along del Mar
seven days a week

the jag of gas-blue ghost-green letters
and girls

hot-nippled in neon
sizzling on then off then on

Spelling it out

Strain your gut
in the sheep-kill forever

You will never
own a house on the water

Or under the green trees
where time passes quickly

and the wings of butterflies
are dusted a delicate blue

5.
Our last morning together
you sit on the edge of the bed
stroking a vein in your thigh

Your hair
smells of coffee and eggs

If I kiss you
you will cry

In a vacant lot
where the baked earth blinks with the mercy
of broken glass

a small black boy
tries to get his tail-less kite
to fly

The three of us
tie the rag of my handkerchief to it

And watch it
haul at its saddle-string

tugging the live sail of its colors up
into the hot gust

like a word remembered

that we do not say

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JOHN LINDBERG

ONE WARM WET AFTERNOON

One warm wet afternoon Pappy heaved his horny feet off the hassock, turned off the ball game, and said, "C'mon, boy. Let's go for a ride." Mammy looked up from her tatting (she made yards of it for the Dorcas Society to sell at church fairs) and nodded. "Yes, son, you go with your father. And make sure you get him home in time for supper. At least there's no bars open on a Sunday."

Pappy just laughed and rubbed up her tits as he went out. Mammy went pale, the way she always did, and brushed down her apron bib, as usual, and jerked her head at me to go. On the porch Pappy was jamming his bare feet into his muddy boots by the mat where Mammy made him leave them. Inside we heard the hymns start up as Mammy turned on the set to her favorite station. Pappy sighed happily at the rain glinting through the sun, and we roared out of the yard in a splatter of mud.

Pappy always had a second-hand car he fixed up like new. He said it was a habit he formed as a boy. Anyhow Pappy's car was always something special. This one was a Lincoln Zephyr V-12, and it went like a scared cat. We drove out to the river road and let the car go up the straight with the tree shadows flicking across the windshield until I got dizzy.

Then we were in the city drifting along empty streets until we came to a place out in the suburbs where they were having a garage sale. Pappy pulled over and said, "Let's see if we can find something for Mammy. She likes to go to these affairs." So we wandered around the lawn until we found a whatnot, one of those three-cornered things with little shelves and gingerbread fretwork.

"That's it!" Pappy said. "That's the one thing here I can't see no use for at all. It's just what Mammy likes." And true enough our parlor was full of such stuff. So we gave the lady ten dollars and put the whatnot in the back of the car and drove on down the road for what the ride would bring next.

Well, we were driving around in a new housing development, because Pappy liked to look at houses going up, how big they were, and how well made, and make guesses at the cost. So we were down at the end of the new streets, all muddy because of no paving yet, when all of a sudden the car gave out. There was a gurgling sort of bursting noise and the temperature and oil gauges went crazy. "Water hose is bust!" Pappy yelled and jammed on the brakes and turned off the key.

Pappy always had a jumble of tools and spare parts in the trunk. In no time at all he cut the rotten end off the hose and fitted a new clamp. But we were out of water. We looked all around that empty housing development with all the skeletons of houses and no water hooked up. But then on the other side of the street, off by itself, we saw what looked like an old shed where maybe the contractor kept tools and stuff. We went over there and fooled around the place looking for a way in, when the door opened by itself and there was this little girl child standing in the door.

"You get away from here or I'm'a put you in jail for thirty years!" she piped in a baby voice and then she started to giggle like she just made a big joke.

We heard a gasp from inside and then a woman came out and swept the girl up onto her hip.

"I'm right sorry for that," she said. "We was funnin' inside here and she just picked up that sayin'. Won't y'all come in and set?" And the woman opened the door and stepped back so we could see a bunch of fellows sitting around a kitchen table drinking beer.

They all raised their beers and called us to come on in. Pappy never refused an invitation like that. We tromped some more mud onto the wood floor as we shook hands and drew up chairs. There were three men, one older, the others about the same age as the woman, who was young, maybe about twenty-two or -three.

She kept the girl on her hip while she fetched us beers from an ice chest. The girl held on to her mother's dress and the woman had to bend over to keep her hip out for the girl to ride. So when the woman gave us the beers she bent over the table and I could see she didn't have any bra under the dress.

When I looked away I saw the young men smiling at me. They were brothers, sons of the older man, and one was married to the woman. They worked for the contractor putting up the houses, and he let them have the shed to live in so they could keep anyone from breaking up the houses on weekends and holidays.

"It ain't much of a place, but, shit, we lived in worse," said the husband. "Them welfare flats downtown ain't got no better sewage than we got here, which is none." He laughed easily and passed around more beers. The woman was busy heating water on a camp stove and washing dishes in a tub. She squatted on the floor to do the dishes and it was easy enough to see that she had no more on her bottom than she had anywhere else under the dress.

"Y'all ought to come back down home," said the older man. "The boys keep runnin' off north until I ain't got nobody to work the farm any more. At least we got indoor plumbin'."

"Yeah, an' I put it in for you," the husband said." I

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ain't workin' no harder up here than I was down home, and I'm gettin' paid."

"Well I can't pay, for sure," the older man said, "but the place will be yours when I'm gone."

"Aw, Pop, leave off that talk and give us some of the liquid corn crop from down home."

So we had some moonshine the old man brought with him on his visit. There were six Mason jars of the stuff. "Don't pack no more wallop than home brew," the other young man complained, "but leastwise the taste's different."

Pappy passed around his plug of tobacco and everyone had to exclaim over it and comment on the rum taste and the smooth leaf in it. The older man brought out some home-grown twist and we all had a chew of that too. The woman took none of the plug tobacco, but dipped snuff from a pocket in her washed-out dress. She finished the dishes and brought a plate of sourdough biscuits to the table. The girl was taking a nap in the lean-to bedroom. We kept at the moonshine and the biscuits and had quite a party.

So finally it was time to leave. The men went out to look at the Lincoln Zephyr with Pappy. He raised the hood and showed them the V-12 block with its two rows of tiny cylinders. They were all interested and poked around at the wires and tubes. The woman came out too, carrying a bucket of water for the car, and right away she noticed the whatnot lying in the back seat. She set the bucket down and her tits rubbed forward against her dress so I could see the nipples press out against the faded cloth.

Well all of this made me want to pee pretty bad so I went out behind the shed, and there was a privy. Inside they had a big poster of a nude girl tacked on the back of the door. I had my thing in my hand and before I knew it I was working away at myself like crazy. The pin-up girl was a lot better looking than the woman in the faded dress.

So when I went back outside I looked around a little shamefaced. Even if she was plain and washed-out, the woman kept drawing my eye. But she was back in the shed, and Pappy was gone too.

"Where's Pappy?" I asked.

The three men looked up from the innards of the car and the husband said, "He taken the bucket back inside for the woman."

And sure enough here he came out of the shed, with the woman leaning in the door and smiling and waving after him. Pappy grinned over his shoulder at her, and came over to shake hands with the men. They all stood around in a circle out of the way of the splatter of mud when the car took off.

As we got into the car I saw that the whatnot was gone. "Where's the whatnot?" Pappy bit a chew from his plug and mumbled, "Must 'a' mislaid it." "Mislaid it!" I said. "Why however could you mislay a thing like that?" "Wasn't hard to do," Pappy said. "Fact is, it was easy."

I looked at him. He had a happy smirk tucked into the creases of his stubbly jowls. "Why you randy old fart!" I said. "You randy old fart." □

JERALD BULLIS

AM I GATHERING MY DAYS

Am I gathering my days into a calm sinuosity of streaming?
finding ways down from the high places, the unforageable
heights where wind hoots as if to taunt, with a malicious
superflux of grandeur, the hootenanny of language?

Are the riffles, runnels, rivulets merging to creeks
that flash with a powering augmentation at the junctures
of hollows, and slope out of the steeps to a loss of creekness
in the abundance of rivers: the rivers feeding the River,

mud-rich with what gets shattered from the mountains?
— Rivulet, creek, joinder of creeks, river, rivers, the River,
Ocean: there's no danger of an endless engagement of surfaces,
oh no — though such might not be altogether unsatisfactory.

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PHILIP DACEY

A SIMPLE GARDEN LADDER:

From the Lost Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges

Imagine: two men, naked, and a ladder,
Opened to a tall A. No place in particular,
Rather a dark abstraction from place.
The ladder, wood, worn, stands grounded, sure,
Yet yearns, by pointing, upward. The most
Remarkable the men, who ascend, descend
The steps, slow or leaping, acrobats, no,
Trans-acrobats, more than mere technicians,
Under the bar of the A, with bow, with crawl,
Between legs to enter and issue therefrom,
Or grapple, with the thing itself, hang, twist
Upon it, rack, riddle, and with each
Other as well, wrestle, to wring out breath
Or admission (even sometimes separately
With only, alone, earnest, themselves), sweat
All through this their shining badge. How lit?
Imagine this, then, Robert, and you have
My dream of nights ago. Or some of it:
There were innuendoes, shades and auras.
It stays and stays, as if not yet am I awake.

Who were they? Wild they were. In weak moments
I meditate upon those men, their ladder. Was it
Theirs? Possession by torment? It was, too, a
Tool. Whose, though? Another's they use, uses them?
Jacob and Esau, yes. But Esau saw no ladder.
Nor did they wrestle, only Jacob with
An angel. These took the place of angels,
Trafficked the vertical, heaven to earth
And reverse, yet were most clearly men, sexed,
No denying that. Their parts both were and were
Not part of the dream-dance without music:
Swinging freely in the sourceless light,
Seemed accompaniment, mere, for the moves
Of the whole bodies, and yet seemed also
What the whole bodies moved around
(Or the bodies, to be whole, moved around),
Circle-center to circumference.

But why
Two? I thought of man divided, even
Christ divided. Between here and there,
The dark earth we take as lover, falling,
The sky, dark, if differently, if beautiful,
Appalling. But no, none of that will do,
Is too simple: these men of mine hung once
Upside down, feet hooked on upper rungs, hands
Grazing ground, so that direction was lost,
In going up they seemed to be going down,
Sky rode low under the flying earth, or seemed to,
I was as lost as North and South. Nor was one
Light the other dark in easy opposition, were twins
(Like Jacob and Esau), their fate shared, I woke
As together they lifted the ladder onto
Their backs (or was I still lost, and it
Was the ladder carried them away?).

Dare
I, Robert, even for laugh, suggest they
Were we? At serious play between
Pride and prayer? Or in debate about my
Faith, the Jesuit ideal (you disapprove; thus,
As I, in my terms, mount, or would, you see
My sad decline). But their bodies were similarly
Trim; ours are no such pair: you, long athletic,
Show it; bare, I am poor, minimal, boy-bodied.
If I watched us, we were in disguise.
Whatever it was I watched was in disguise.

Still, I know this much: it was a simple
Garden ladder. To climb upon to pick
Fruit from a tree. In looking back I am surprised
It was so simple a thing. It seemed so much more.
Though I can't say for certain now, it it-
self might have been the very source of light,
In memory it feels so. Ladder-light
By which I saw the bodies of the men.
By which they saw each other and themselves.

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SPACES

Which Reality Do You Prefer?

In Mill Valley, the titles of the television spectacular on NBC, Saturday, July 22, at 8 pm Pacific Daylight Time (conflicting with summer reruns of Bob Newhart), are lines of dominoes that fall endlessly in sequence, followed by the camera, to spell out words. Here in California a savings bank uses the technique to advertise itself in commercials. Perhaps, in other parts of the country, the commercial isn't seen, but I bet somebody uses the technique. Trendy it is. The aforementioned commercial is, in fact, on the show. Besides trendy it's cute, and the enormous amount of time spent in standing dominoes up to knock down is nothing for the extravaganza that Paramount Pictures is paying to have made for the premiere and subsequent release of their movie, "Foul Play," starring Chevy Chase, Goldie Hawn, Burgess Meredith, and a team from "Stunts Unlimited." It's to be taped on a weekend in San Francisco in July, where, of course, the exteriors of the picture were filmed, back in November of 1977. If your choice was to watch Newhart instead—whatever the plot of his almost inevitably hilarious half hour as Dr. Bob Hartley—you got a better deal.

The news release sent to members of the press in San Francisco:

> *Hollywood moves to San Francisco on Saturday, July 8, when Paramount Pictures' "Starplane" flies two airplane loads of film and television stars to the world premiere . . . billed as "A weekend of FOUL PLAY," the trip is being organized as part of an hour television special . . . in addition to the film's stars . . . Paramount expects more than 50 show business luminaries to participate in the weekend festivities . . . Henry Winkler, Sally Kellerman, Cat Stevens, Olivia Newton-John, John Ritter, Shirley Jones, Parker Stevenson, Loretta Swit and all the T-Birds and Pink Ladies from "Grease" . . . also Paramount's Chairman of the Board Barry Diller, President Michael Eisner and VP in Charge of Production*

Don Simpson . . . all the trapping of early-day Hollywood, including door-to-door limousine service . . . a pre-premiere cocktail reception, a glamorous klieg-lit premiere, a post-premiere Disco Dinner Dance and Show in the Golden Gateway Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel . . . the premiere will benefit the San Francisco Spring Opera Theatre and the American Conservatory Theatre. . . .

* * *

On a side drive at the Hyatt Regency are brand new shiny video equipment trucks and mobile units with built-in control boards, banks of pale flickering monitors. A typical summer San Francisco late afternoon, no fog yet, a chilly strong wind blowing.

"Twenty limousines and three cops," one of the motorcycle officers who worked with the 2nd Unit of "Foul Play" says, "coming in on the freeway from the airport." Limousines—Cadillacs mostly, a few Lincolns, and one Mercedes 600—are lined up along the hotel side at the foot of California Street. One license plate reads: V I P 4. At 3 o'clock in the morning the party's over and they are still there, dull and quiet, a row of gleaming sleeping beetles under the orange tinted street lamps.

* * *

The cocktail reception is staged in the center of the lobby, conveniently architecturally cordoned off from walk-ways around the edge. It's a level up, with fountains and a huge bronze structural ball suspended above the cocktail lounge; waiters circulate with trays of exotic Chinese food, succulent fragments of roast duck, crusty tiny egg-rolls, crisp barbecued ribs; from three bars they dispense everything (including Perrier water on the rocks). Theatrical lights are set up for the cameras, and from the passages at the edge ordinary people watch hungrily. "There's Joey Travolta—singing." "Look at Martin Mull!" "There's Chevy—where's Goldie." "John Ritter—*super*!"

* * *

The lobby (in fact, the whole hotel) is an architectural wonder or monstrosity, depending on your taste. In the lobby it feels like you're in an enormous cave. From the outside you see these sloping tiers rising on one side like steep bleachers at an athletic field; the other and the end are flat. Inside, the floors of rooms, with open balconies for halls. The center is hollow and from the top (15 stories—?) you look all the way to the lobby floor. The elevators are cages with glass walls that run up the outside of this inside wall. From inside them you can look out and, queasily perhaps, down.

* * *

Gold necklaces, chains, are big on all the men. A local union official is wearing his. Open shirts with collars flared over suit jackets, vests too, or disco clothes, and a number of tall thin young women with loose fitted slacks, heels, and soft shirts open all the way to the waist. In the men's room mirror, later at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, Martin Mull, and others wearing their necklaces, check their hair comb.

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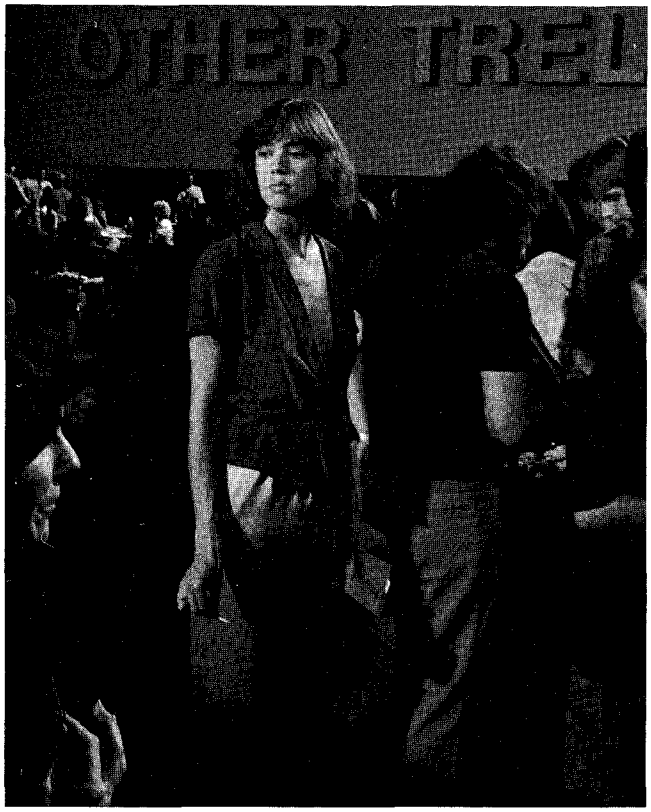
Video tape cameras are everywhere—on pedestals, on an enormous Chapman crane, hand-held. A cameraperson, shepherded by a cable pusher, worms his way through the swarming dancers on the disco floor. Wearing technician's full-dress, t-shirt, jeans, sneakers, through the lens his eye focuses on Chevy Chase who smiles abstractly as he dances. Her pedestal at the side of the floor, another cameraperson says she's destroyed. The call was 6 am this morning and they have to wrap after the party finishes. There are twelve in the sound department alone, fifty or sixty in the whole crew. For those hours and that number of high priced technicians that's not expensive? You bet it is, and air date is only a couple of weeks away. Some acts repeat the number 2 - 3 times before they're satisfied. Documentary—well, this is going on in prime time and they shouldn't look terrific?

* * *

The official title is "A Television Special on the Celebration of the Film, 'Foul Play.' " Paramount did the same for "Grease"—"American Hot-Wax"—"Saturday Night Fever." Asked the purpose of these shows (before the fact) the PR lady said, "A tool, you might say." "A selling tool?" she was asked. After the fact, when asked for broken-leg stories, she laughed and drew back. The people who did the number, they're the ones to talk to—and that's Rogers & Cowan down south.



In the show Goldie and Chevy are pictured in what appears to be a corner, sitting together and looking over the party. In their banter about what's going on the viewer's impression is she's there. That's a distortion, a wrenching of reality which NBC (and other networks) have been known to do even with news documentaries—most recently the distorted special on Marin County. Goldie Hawn is in Europe—making a film.

* * *

On the air the show opens with a montage of stock shots of San Francisco from the air for the Starplane's flying. It's a pastiche which continues—10 minutes of interior plane shots, singing "I left my heart in San Francisco . . " and banal witless conversation between celebrities. Chevy was a little waspish with John Ritter about the pronunciation of his name which should be sounded like CH (hard!), not the car. Various commercial breaks, scenes from the cocktail party, celebrities doing more shticks, Burgess introducing a group called "Meat Loaf"—meat loaf? The disco (250 thousand dollars it cost to build), was not half as exciting on the tape as it was for real—in spite of all the cameras. And intercut are more banalities and witlessness from celebrities with faces I recognized and faces I didn't, and clips from the film.

* * *

One thousand plus attended. One hundred and fifty tickets were sold for $150 a couple. (Spring Opera and ACT should have been given what the TV show and the disco set cost.) Paramount invited four hundred plus, and there were three hundred press.

* * *

The disco set *is* terrific, a stage in the center of the room, a proper hollow floor, at each corner metallic constructions, towers of light, the booth—also raised—built into the left wall, on its front in big letters: FOUL PLAY. Around the walls are tables to sit at and in the corners are tables loaded with food: cracked crab, plates of lox, bagels, cream cheese, chafing dishes of delicacies; the bars abound. With decadent abandon the dancers dance. Paramount pays the piper.

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Speaking of the "Foul Play" premiere with an actress, recently on a job, mention is made of Colin Higgins' first screenplay—become the cult movie, "Harold and Maude." There's a strong sense of a feeling in her voice, on her face, something aberrant in the picture, the story of the affair between a young boy and an elderly woman, full of life. Perhaps it was aberrant, decadent, but fascinating too. And intricate and comic and satiric, with metaphors that were quite real. Now contemplate that sensibility as evolved into "Foul Play," Higgins' third screenplay and first directorial effort—for me it's too bad. Not that it's a bad picture, just that there's little there but stars (playing well), a slick plot with suspense and a little blood, some fair comedy, and trendy caricaturing of current sex, the exciting stunt chase. The producer says, facetiously, the press will tell him whether "Foul Play" is a success. I think the film rentals will. And I wish the American industry would give Colin Higgins the option, or he would make the choice, to pursue the genre of "Harold and Maude"—that picture leaves a viewer something to think about the next day.

2

In Paris, Francois Truffaut was 14 in 1946, and it was then he began to see American movies which, obviously, had not been shown during the German occupation. They were subtitled, of course, and Truffaut "was surprised to find I had to *read* when I went to a film!" Pleasantly, I dare say, since he was to become the author or co-author of all his 15 features (and 3 shorts), and before that, at the age of 20, begin publishing critical articles in the famous and influential journal, "*Cahiers du Cinema.*" Then, with John Luc Godard ("Breathless" 1960), Alain Resnais ("*Hiroshima Mon Amour*" 1959), and his own fiction of his childhood ("The 400 Blows" 1959), the "New Wave," a seminal genre and another turning point for film history, was born. Truffaut is and was fascinated by film, having been the kind of buff who skipped school in his teens to sit in dark theatres in the afternoon, in those early days, becoming a student of the American Films of the '40s. Two of his favorites were Hitchcock (about whom in 1966 he wrote *Hitchcock*, "a definitive study"), and Howard Hawks, admiring the former for his unity and the latter for his versatility. "He (Hawks) made the very best film in each of the categories he worked," he is quoted in an article by Charles Higham in "Action" magazine, the house organ of the Directors Guild of America (and recently, certainly, one of the most incisive and honest journals in the puff-ridden field of movie magazines). Truffaut is quoted further about Hitchcock:

> *My main remembrance of those early experiences of seeing Hitchcock was a sense of fear. Not just a feeling that the characters on the screen were so often afraid, but because I was afraid when I saw them. I saw them in the afternoon instead of going to school. I 'played hookey.' Often I sneaked in through the exits without paying. So I sat there, terrified of being discovered. Not only were the people in Hitchcock's films filled with anxiety and fear, not only, as I found later, was* Hitchcock *filled with anxiety and fear–he was raised by Jesuits in the Catholic faith–but* I *was filled with terror and guilt also and identified utterly with his world.*

Most recently Truffaut was cast in a major role in Steven Spielberg's fascinating (and thin) blockbuster, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," and the following interview, by Daniele Heymann and Catherine Laporte, is taken from the Paris *L'Express*. I think it illustrates the sensitivity of an artist, and represents an honest man, neither attribute all that common, either in film or life.

Q: In "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," you acted in someone else's film. How did you feel?

A: I felt I was an actor from the beginning. I felt myself becoming more "feminized," with the variety of meanings that that implies. I wanted Steven Spielberg to be satisfied; I experienced a certain pleasure in pleasing him.

Q: Is this "state" of being an actor disturbing?

A: It is a state of mixed pleasure and frustration. The pleasure of having limited responsibility, of lending one's appearance and that is all, of having no decisions to make. But there is a lot of frustration, too. I had never realized how much the actors are kept in the background. Some would walk up and down all day; they made me think of prisoners or pimps; they were so inactive.

Q: Are you tempted to make a film in America?

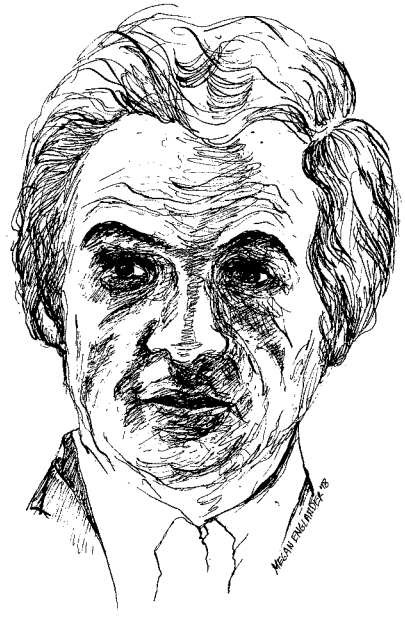
A: In France you don't appear ridiculous when you make a film without stars; in America, I would be making a "B" movie.

Q: Weren't you offered "Bonnie and Clyde"?

A: Yes, it was a good script, but not for me. Strange to say, I don't like gangsters. I was born in Pigalle, and even though I didn't suffer directly, very early on I saw gangsterism for what it was: nasty men who would hit women in the street. Melville succeeded in treating gangsters as tragic heroes; I couldn't. I realized that in the final analysis I took no pleasure in making films about politicians, gangsters, or the military. By process of elimination I got to where I filmed only women and children.

Q: How does the pessimism in which the French cinema is immersed affect you?

A: Not only French cinema is going badly. German and Italian cinema is too, and the English cinema no longer exists. What is the crisis? The malproportion between the creative passion of the people in the field, and the lack of pas-



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sion of the spectators, who have been force-fed and over-solicited by TV.

I believe that color has done the cinema almost as much harm as has TV. We must struggle against too-great realism, otherwise there is no art. When a film is in color, filmed in the street with sun and shade and dialogues drowned out by the noise of Mopeds, this is no longer cinema. Now ugliness dominates. Eight of ten films are as boring to watch as a traffic jam.

Q: Yet you don't make films in black and white.

A: I can't. No matter what film it is, it will most likely be shown on TV one day, and TV will buy only color.

Q: Why is there no political filmmaking in France?

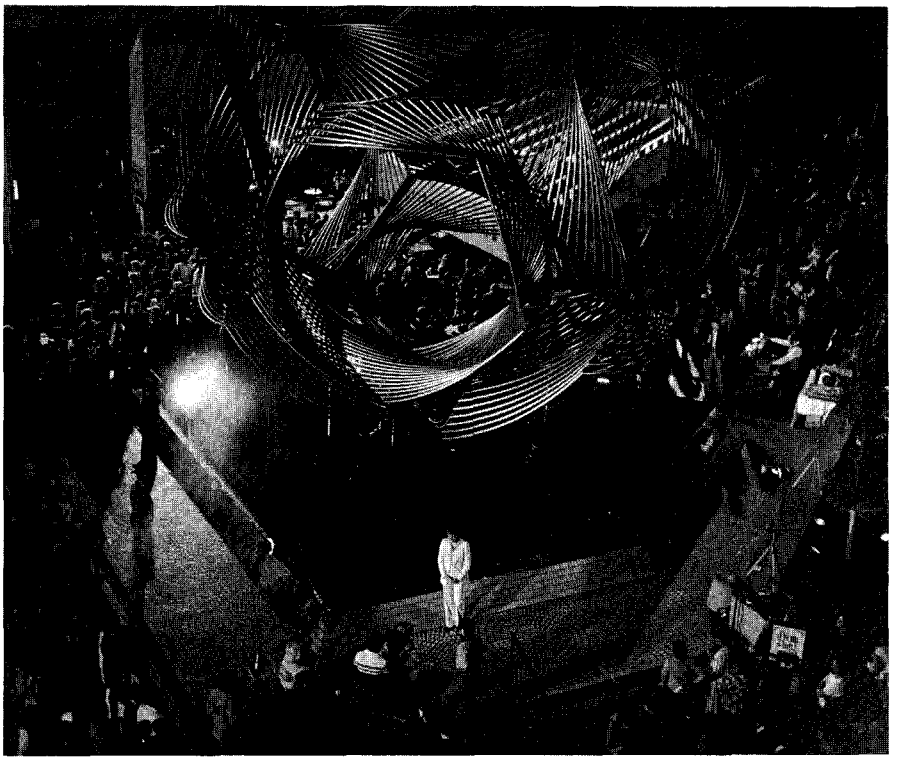
A: Politics goes badly with fiction. It is my belief that there is no art without paradoxes, and in a political film there are no paradoxes, since it has already been decided in the script who is good and who is bad.

Q: How do you plan your work?

A: Films are fatiguing. To maintain discipline throughout a film is tiring. The refreshing thing is to do the opposite. To change activity. After you have spent weeks staring at Isabelle Adjani's face for "Adele H.," you relax with 60 children in "Small Change." You have to go from one discipline to its opposite in order to regain your enthusiasm. I keep files, notebooks, some of which I have had for fifteen years. Little pieces of paper, with phrases, bits of dialogue, newspaper articles. I had one ten-year-old press clipping yellowing in my files. A man visited his parents with his young wife; she ran off with her father-in-law. I put this situation in "Day for Night."

Q: Do you think that criticism has lost its savagery since your days as a critic?

A: Less than it has its integrity. When we said, " 'Lola Montes' is an admirable film," we believed it was. We knew its music by heart, could recite its



dialogue. Today critics often say a film is admirable but they wouldn't see it twice for anything.

Q: You are apparently balanced and disciplined—a very disciplined "madman."

A: That's right. I can't be accused of having invented anything. I believe the world existed before me. I don't feel I am important. In my work the film is more important than I am. It may be wrong to think this way, but it helps me. For example, I didn't want to have a car accident while shooting 'Jules and Jim' because I knew the film would be so complicated to cut that I would have to stay alive until the end of the mixing. Other times, I tell myself, I can kick the bucket now. I was in Finland when de Gaulle died, and I couldn't believe it. I said, "He can't have died, he is in the middle of writing his

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memoirs!" It seemed inconsistent to die in the middle of a project.

Q: What is your ultimate aim?

A: To go in the direction of fiction. To be more poignant, more engaging, more intriguing, more interesting. That is what I am looking for. Not truth but interest.

3

In Nevada, at this wild lake between two ridges of arid mountains, in the desert, the birds—gulls and pelicans and others I don't know—at the beginning of dusk when the evening wind has started, landing on the water, eating, forming groups, all different, like the land.

But the desert, like the ocean, is not benign. All day it sears under the sun, then at dusk the wind can rise and seem strong enough to blow you away. You have to keep things battened down, beat off the insects, not dehydrate, or fry.

Here the dog begins to take on the look of the wild. In the heat of the day he walks in to his belly in the water to cool off. (He fell in a swimming pool when he was six weeks old and hasn't been totally immersed—ocean, lake, any place—since.) He stands, staring out into the distance. Does he see the water, the arid brown mountains across it—what does he watch? And what does he think? I have had him since he was weaned, watched him born on a rainy spring night in Tucson in 1968, and I know him very well, but I wonder how he thinks?

The next day is cooler. In the morning there's a north-east wind. When it's cooler everything is more active here. The birds fly and land, almost frisky. The echelon of stately pelicans fly north along the shore in the morning, and back at dusk. (This lake harbors the largest colony of white pelicans in the United States.) In the air they are magnificent, a file of them sweeping low across the water, using their black tipped wings in sequence, gliding in sequence; on the water they are pompous, and like basset hounds, a little foolish.

The gulls are circling the cardboard bag that the picnicking kids littered (just walked away from it) yesterday. In it, choice fragments of something that one grabs and flies off with, all the others chasing, diving and swooping. Then a flight of pelicans interdicts and joins the chase. The gull lands and the other gulls land too; they scuffle, but are interrupted by the arrival of stately heavy duty pelicans, leaning back and extending webbed feet, banking their wings and settling in. The gulls take off.

Later it is hotter. The wind stops, and the air settles down; it becomes still. Along the black sand beach the lake water riffles. In the distance, flat calm, the mountains on the other shore are reflected perfectly, upside down.

It seems such a similar and simplistic view, rock, sand, and water, all day under the sun. But that is an illusion you begin to see. That for every change in nature, the wind, the sun, the temperature, the colors of the land and water and sky are subtly different. Every infinitesmal point in the sun's arc, different shadows on the rock's face.

Yet I didn't know it until I made a film, and had it processed and looked at it to see I had photographed—a sequence of similar shots. The film did not resolve the subtle differences. What was infinitely various and fascinating to the eye seemed flat, without depth, on film.

That's the connection between the lake and film, which is not to denigrate either the one's real beauty or the artistic limitation of the other. All art has limits, by craft mechanics, as well as form. Which medium do you use to make a piece of artistic expression out of a section of water in the middle of a desert? Film—tape—prose—poetry—brush—or pen and ink? Pick a, b, c, d, or all of the above—it depends on which part of verisimilitude you wish to portray.

—*Lawrence Sturhahn*

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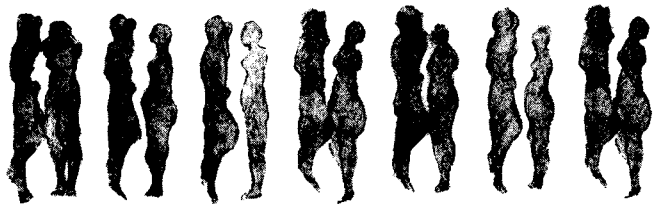

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THE NEW MOTHERHOOD

We usually prefer new diseases, or at least symptoms with new names. It is more attractive to have "midlife crisis," "a narcissistic personality disorder," or "jogger's knee" than merely to be old, selfish, or out of shape. Now one social disorder has recently erupted with the thumping zeal of a misloaded washing machine: motherhood, and its current prominence perplexes us, especially since several of the new books on the subject tell us that they are exposing a lie, a flaw, that has for centuries lain deeply and darkly at the base of human social arrangements.

For generations psychiatrists and the media castigated schizophrenogenic mothers, overprotecting mothers, working mothers. The new books on motherhood are different. They are authored by women, they are part of a feminist effort to understand and revalue women's roles, and they are written with an explosive and personal urgency. This wave began calmly enough with Jesse Bernard's fat sociological treatise, *The Future of Motherhood* (Dial), in 1974. Bernard considered motherhood as a job that women learn, usually well enough, along with the skills necessary for it, like empathy and compassion, and she described some of the strains on the job introduced by women's simultaneous participation in the traditionally-male paid labor force. She set up three propositions that are fundamental to all of the later studies: motherhood is a malleable social institution, not a fact of nature; mothers bring up daughters prepared to be mothers like themselves; and all-female mothering permits a patriarchal polarization of society that should be altered to give us a "new balance" of nurturance and power.

1976 brought forth two difficult, long-gestated books. Both combined unorthodox social science, history, and mythology with anguished personal observation and broad social speculations. Dorothy Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (Harper & Row) has steadily gained a feminist following. Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (Norton), popular and controversial since its issue, influenced the four books being reviewed here. Stephanie Spinner and Lyn Lifshin introduce their anthologies with quotations from Rich. "For centuries no one talked of these feelings," wrote Rich, but now "the masks of motherhood are cracking through." Friday originally subtitled her book "the first lie," and these books crackle with the desire to debunk and deflate the stereotype of the perfect, all-giving mother. Having barely learned to bake them, are these daughters lining up to throw apple pie in their mothers' faces?

Not exactly. These four authors believe that a woman's bond with her mother is her primary, most important, and potentially most difficult one. Yet, according to Lifshin, "the mother-daughter relationship has been largely ignored in literature." Her anthology, like Spinner's, is an attempt to repair that neglect. The fiction, "mirrorlike," reflects our new understanding of the "complexity and variety" of motherhood, Spinner tells us. *Motherlove's* cover is a Mary Cassatt drypoint called "The Mirror," in which we see the backs of the embraced mother and child as they cannot see themselves. Both anthologies form part of a larger feminist project to find new heroines, authors, and subjects shot down from the male canon and ready for reconsideration. Lifshin says that *Tangled Vines* is meant to be a "celebration" of shared feelings. In the looking glass of these stories and poems, we see our own repeated images, troubling pictures put into perspective by the two theoretical books on motherhood.

Lifshin invited authors to submit their poems on mothers and daughters to her, so the occasion of *Tangled Vines* is itself the inspiration for some of the poems. The fifty-one poems are contemporary, half since 1974 and thirteen published for the first time. The thirty-nine authors include Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich, Anne Sexton, and Nikki Giovanni. The sixteen stories in *Motherlove*, each by a different author, date from Colette and Katherine Mansfield up through 1976. In both collections, the most recent pieces are the most explicit about conflicts between mothers and daughters, the most resolved to shout the unspeakable, as if newly given permission, while the older stories and poems are often subtler. Both anthologies concentrate on specifically female experiences. There are poems about "Making the Jam without You" (Maxine Kumin) and "First Menstruation" (Ellen Bass), and stories called "Good Housekeeping" (Rosellen Brown) and "I Stand Here Ironing" (Tillie Olsen). Both anthologies are ethnically eclectic, showing us similar generational strife in black, Irish, Jewish, and Chinese-American families, in rich and

The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender, by Nancy Chodorow. University of California. $12.95.

My Mother/My Self: The Daughter's Search for Identity, by Nancy Friday. Delacorte. $9.95.

Tangled Vines: A Collection of Mother & Daughter Poems, edited by Lyn Lifshin. Beacon Press. $3.95.

Motherlove: Stories by Women about Motherhood, edited by Stephanie Spinner. Dell. $2.25.

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working-class homes. Like *My Mother/My Self,* both anthologies are organized loosely by subject from girlhood through adolescence, marriage, motherhood, and the death of one's mother, as though to restore to women the whole life cycle from which we have been deprived by a tradition that stopped our stories at "they lived happily ever after." As a result of this arrangement, both anthologies impress us with a sense of generic female experience.

This sense of female continuity, of women blending into and repeating other women, pervades these writings, as does its obverse, the desire for individual autonomy. Other recurrent themes are women's sexuality, body image, and death and the primary love and hate between generations. "It strikes me often that Oedipus must have been the only child in history who ever really loved his mother," quips the narrator of Penelope Gilliatt's "Come Back If It Doesn't Get Better." Ultimately, this rebellious daughter recognizes her mother's courage and need for love, though when her mother tries to hug her, "it was as bad as being inside her guts again." Many of the poems of *Tangled Vines* serve this hostility between daughters and mothers raw. "Through every night we hate/ preparing the next day's/ war" (Shirley Kaufman). "I hissed at her, 'I didn't ask to be born!' " (Judith Hemschemeyer). "We hated each other/ as the soul hates the body/ . . . as one lover hates the other" (Erica Jong).

In several stories, mothers turn in rage from the overwhelming responsibility for children. A chemist turned housewife in Joyce Carol Oates' "The Children" murders her own rebellious impulses by beating her daughter, and the photographer in Rosellen Brown's "Good Housekeeping" revenges herself against her baby by fixing him as a closeup of "angry uvula." The mother in Tillie Olsen's powerful "I Stand Here Ironing" accepts responsibility for the irreparable damage she has done her daughter's spirit because she couldn't afford to love her enough, though our anger is deflected to the economic system that strands poor single mothers. "So all that is in her does not bloom—but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by."

The only real villain in these stories is the spoiled mother in Jean Stafford's "Cops and Robbers" who sees her daughter solely as a narcissistic extension of herself. ". . . You can't say to a child, 'Darling, you are only a symbol. It was really *my* beautiful hair that was cut off, not yours,' " she confides, stroking her cat and ignoring her shorn daughter. On the other hand, the good mothers of these stories love their children but can let them go. The mother in Joanne Greenberg's "Hunting Season" allows her epileptic son to play alone on dangerous mountain terrain, and Colette's naive little dancer registers wonder at her "chit of fifteen months who already has ideas of her own." Other heroines extend the traditional maternal virtues into personal toughness or political action. The farm mother in Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" resists the slick, dogmatic daughter who wants her heirloom quilt as a wallhanging and instead saves it for the downhome daughter who can quilt herself. In Nadine Gordimer's "A Chip of Glass Ruby," a mild Indian mother of nine gets arrested for mimeographing anti-apartheid leaflets because "she doesn't want anybody to be left out . . . people without somewhere to live, hungry kids. . . ."

In the poetry, the daughters' quest for individual identity often sounds frightened and unsure: "How much leeway do I have to become myself?" (Ellen Bass). "Mother, I must complete my solo" (Anne Waldman). "I had about as much chance, Mother/ as the carp who thrashed/ in your bathtub on Friday" (L.L. Zeiger). In other poems, the daughter struggles to be able to recognize her mother as a separate person. "I remember the first time/ i consciously saw her/ . . . i remember thinking: what a beautiful lady" (Nikki Giovanni). The mothers, in contrast, are proud yet wistful about their creations. They express wonder at their little clones that escape to independent selfhood. "I marvel to have made you perfect" (Sandra Hochman). "Dear, you are in my hands like dough/ . . . how/ can I get you free of me?" (Patricia Goedicke). A mother sees her daughter taking a bath as "this replica, this split-finned tail/ thrashing white in the tub, this fish/ that got away" (Sharon Olds).

Yet repeatedly both mothers and daughters return to the theme of repetition, of the merging of the generations also indicated by the proliferation of new compounds, "motherlove," "the motherbond," "the mother knot." ". . . Through you/ I am born" (Sandra Hochman). "I am her only novel" (Marge Piercy). "Like those old pear-shaped Russian dolls . . ./ may we carry our mothers forth in our bellies./ May we, borne onward by our daughters, ride/ in the Envelope of Almost-Infinity" (Maxine Kumin).

Daughters speak of their mothers in *Tangled Vines* with pity and with horror, in sentimental nostalgia or through a sensual haze. The mothers are too close to be seen as separate characters, either heroines or villains, but they may be spoken of with great love or great bitterness. "My mother/ the magician/ . . . can turn anything/ into nothing, she's a hole in space" (Sharon Olds).

In the duplicating cycle of mothers and daughters, the enemy mother is an enemy within. "The child I do not have/ is the one my mother/ always wanted (Ellen Wittlinger). Images of the mother as negation conflate with images of the mother as death. In the poems women mourn dead babies, dead mothers, women who died in childbirth. When a girl with a crushed foot cries out in pain, her hurt mother "saw her life stretch out . . ./ I saw her torn in childbirth/ and . . . / in her own death" (Anne Sexton). The stories, too, show dead babies and dying mothers as part of women's legacies. The heroine of Gail Godwin's "Dream Children" finds peace after stillbirth only by hallucinating a son. Maxine Kingston's dreams in "Shaman" are less consoling. "My mother has given me pictures to dream—nightmare babies that recur, shrinking again and again to fit in my palm. . . . Before we can leave our parents, they stuff our heads like the suitcases they jampack with homemade underwear." In both the stories and the poems, the imagery of death blends into that of

"Women's imagery is haunted with fetal mothers, duplicating daughters, and circular transformations."

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natural cycle: flowers, animals, the sky, the sea. "You are puffed up in death/ like a corpse pulled from the sea" (Adrienne Rich). "One day a strange girl will step/ to the back of a mirror, cutting my ropes/ of sea and thunder and spring/ . . . I stand already condemned" (Audre Lorde).

Repetition and circular patterns structure these women's writings. They are rich with seasonal and recurrent ironies, with imagery of enclosures and transformation. They jolt us with changes of perspective and of scale, the boundaryless Alice-in-Wonderland world of female psychology. Narrative voice and point of view shimmer and change before us. The daughter in bed becomes the mother standing by her, "seeing her grow before my eyes" (Barbara Eve). Within the stories, authors lean out toward us in the second person, tease us with the first, disappear behind the third.

The repetition and merging of women's experience blurs the Lifshin anthology as a whole. Many poems sound alike. Most are in the same modernist idiom, colloquial, wry, metaphoric, yet uncolored by allusion or flowers of rhetoric. There are no sonnets to mother, as though fear of Mother's Day sentimentality has picked these poems bare. Voices blend; there are few memorable lines. Although many of the younger poets imitate Plath, none matches her distinctive rhythm, her verbal precision, her high mocking ring: "I learned, I learned, I learned elsewhere/ from muses unhired by you, dear mother." The stories, more developed and distanced than the poems, are also more distinctive in their styles, and *Motherlove* ranges from Godwin's gothicism to Gilliatt's sardonic wit to Paley's juicy idiolect. The poems of *Tangled Vines* are perhaps too new, too insistent in the desire to claim our mothers and our daughters as our sisters, and too directly magical in using poetry as ritual, as invocation, as curse. In *Of Woman Born* Rich wrote that she had given up the fantasy of "some infinitely healing conversation" with her mother in which they could "say everything at last" and instead substituted the writing of her book. The most naked poems of *Tangled Vines*, too, are letters home: "and you, the one person I trust to love me, to be there for me, as long as you live, you, I don't know how to write to" (Ellen Bass).

"Women's disillusionment with men leads not to lesbianism but to motherhood."

My Mother/ My Self and *The Reproduction of Mothering* explain the emphasis on sexuality, merging and independence, and primary love and hate between generations found in the two anthologies. The two theoretical books analyze the emotions recorded in the women's poetry and fiction in terms of women's personalities as formed by patriarchy.

"Women mother," Chodorow begins, that is, they are the primary caretakers of young children, not as a necessary consequence of biology or of the simple indoctrination of social roles, but "through social structurally induced psychological processes." Female mothering creates female personality like itself and male personality defined in opposition from it. "Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother. . . . By contrast, women as mothers (and men as not-mothers) produce sons whose nurturant capacities and needs have been systematically curtailed and repressed. This prepares men . . . for primary participation in the impersonal extrafamilial world of work and public life."

For both Friday and Chodorow, all preverbal children develop overwhelming emotions toward their first caretakers. In societies in which these caretakers are all women and in which single mothering fosters intense and exclusive ties, these strong irrational feelings get transferred to women as a class. The infant's first love is demanding, unrealistic; it does not perceive itself as separate from the magical being who answers its desires, and for the rest of its life it craves a return to this merged intimacy of mother and child. But the mother is not perfect in responding to the child's needs, and so the infant also feels envy, rage, and fear of loss. It may perceive these frightening emotions as part of a Bad Mother split off from the Good Mother or as part of its bad self.

Girls stay in strong emotional contact with this primary mother longer than boys do. They learn that they are like her, that they may become mothers themselves and so experience her power. According to Friday, mothers and daughters are too terrified of losing each other to be themselves. "Because we cannot afford to hate mother, we become like her," and so women's imagery becomes haunted with the fetal mothers, duplicating daughters, and circular transformations we saw in the poetry and prose fiction. For Friday and Rich, the prospect of "becoming one's mother" is frightful. Rich calls this fear "matrophobia," "a dread that if one relaxes one's guard one will identify with her completely" and thus with the "restrictions and degradations of a female existence."

"A woman's bond with her mother is primary, and potentially most difficult."

Boys are introduced to reality and independence earlier than girls by learning that they are unlike the mother. The father enters the mental world of both boys and girls as a more distant figure, representing freedom from the mother's pervasive power. The boy learns to identify with the father's sex and the privileges it confers. According to Chodorow, the girl wavers longer in a "bisexual triangle," eventually attaining heterosexuality while keeping strong and ambivalent ties to her mother. For both sexes, male power will come to seem rational and safe while female power will remain infinite and frightening, so determining of the presence or absence of life itself that it becomes charged with imagery of negation, death, and vast natural and magical forces.

Chodorow claims her theory accounts for previously-observed differences between male and female personality without succumbing to biological oversimplifications or the misogyny of old-fashioned psychoanalysis. She explains "women's proneness to identification" as "a product of the continuing importance of the preoedipal stance of the ego; women's stronger fantasy life . . . grows from the lack of repression of oedipal attachment to the father; women's 'subjectivity' . . . comes from continuity of the preoedipal 'lack of reality principle' and primary identification; and women's greater intuition and inner perception . . .

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from their richer inner object-world and the greater continuity in their external object relations."

Chodorow's key word is "asymmetry"; Friday's is "symbiosis." In Chodorow's theory, men and women are objectively out of phase, socialized to have different needs and different personalities. For Friday, it is chiefly women's development that is stunted. She believes in the permanence of the magic mother-daughter tie: "nothing mother really feels ever escapes us," and she sees this primary empathy as oppressive and frightening. In Chodorow's version, the empathy the daughter learns from her mother is an asset; the kind of merging illustrated in the women's poetry and fiction is a sign of this empathy. "Growing girls come to define and experience themselves as continuous with others; their experience of self contains more flexible or permeable ego boundaries. . . ." You can blame patriarchy for developmental "asymmetry"; you blame mother for gobbling you up, for instilling the childish desire to retreat to her or to marry as a surrogate "symbiosis."

For Chodorow, then, female personality is richer and more complex than male personality, though it suffers disabilities for independence and public mastery. For Friday, female personality is much more seriously maimed. Women are unable to compete successfully for work and power because they fear the loss of love too much. In addition, women suffer from a core of self-hatred and self-contempt. All women think part of themselves is ugly. This is not the superficial result of advertising or male standards, but a deep sense of the dirtiness and inferiority of the female body. "There is something centrally wrong . . . menstruation." "Convince a woman that her vagina is beautiful, and you have the makings of an 'equal' person."

Both authors concur with much recent feminist fiction that heterosexuality is a dismal and disappointing affair. Friday's assumptions that bodily inferiority and sexual dissatisfaction are universal female obsessions are not borne out by Chodorow's theory or by the poems and fictions. For Friday it is once again a girl's mother, not the institution of heterosexuality, that cripples her daughter's sexuality. "Mother is inhibition," she declares; we inherit her "fear of sex." Single sex is nicer than married, Friday believes, because we never saw our mothers single, and so we can act freely in this new role. Even then, "romantic delirium" and emotional attachment may prevent us from enjoying sex as freely and spontaneously as men do. Once we have husbands and children, we act like mom and enjoy it less. I'm skeptical. Studies of harassed young mothers indicate that perpetual fatigue by day may cloud their bliss at night, yet, despite it all, many women enjoy married sex more than the titillations of dating.

The authors agree that in intercourse everyone seeks the unity of the original mother-child bond. According to Friday, "intimacy is just an old record we replay." Dinnerstein comments that "our sexuality resonates . . . with the massive orienting passions" of our infancy. More graphically, she explains that we all want "to be fucked as the baby would like to be fed: on demand and at the rate one chooses and as long as one wants"; men returning to wombs are more likely to find these satisfactions than are women. Friday follows Dinnerstein and popular belief in considering women more monogamous than men. Chodorow concurs that men can divorce physical eroticism from emotion more easily than women can, but she thinks men are more emotionally dependent on women than the reverse, and she cites studies in which divorced or widowed women cope better than comparable men. Another explanation is that because of their exclusive early love for mother, men are less tolerant of sexual sharing than women and so enforce marital monogamy on their wives while not practicing it themselves.

"Women think part of themselves is ugly, from a deep sense of the dirtiness and inferiority of the female body."

Chodorow is almost as negative as Friday about the potential satisfactions of heterosexuality today, but her explanation is much more sophisticated than blaming our mothers' hangups. In her theory, girls develop heterosexual object choice as a result of their fathers' seductive behavior and their need to escape mother. However, women do not achieve secure heterosexual love as men do, though all men's capacities for feeling are muted and repressed by their rejection of the feminine. The girl's extended, close preoedipal bonding with her mother is followed by "oedipal oscillations" of the "bisexual triangle." The boy loves his mother and later substitutes other women; the father is a feared rival but not a competing object of love.

Thus both Friday and Chodorow think women are bonded more closely to other women than to men. For Friday, this is a misfortune. "Men are disappointing; they do not have our need for intense relationships. . . . The leitmotif of our lives is that we will fail with men and so bind ourselves to other women." The bond is not one of "loving friends" but of "mutual jailers." In contrast, Rich assumes that "normal" women turn their "most intense psychic and physical energies" towards men, and this is a misfortune. It would be better if the "taboo" between women were broken so that we could reunite with our mothers in "profoundest love and loyalty." For Chodorow, women's disillusionment with men leads not to lesbianism but to motherhood. Women denied the intimacy they desire with men become mothers, exclude their husbands, reexperience the magic of infantile closeness through their children, and so perpetuate the cycle.

In 1974 Bernard concluded that "motherhood . . . is too important to leave to women." Dinnerstein and Chodorow urge the necessity of men participating fully in early childcare in order to break the cycle of female nurturance countered by male contempt for women and resentment of female power, though Rich objects that male nurturance will always be "stolen" under patriarchy and that only women can give one another the "strength" which is "the bloodstream of our inheritance." Chodorow invites us to the leap of faith that children raised by both parents will have the best traits of both polarized sexes now.

The differing solutions to the problems of motherhood offered by Friday, Rich, and Chodorow reflect differences between liberal, radical, and socialist feminist philosophies

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within the women's liberation movement. Friday wants women to carve a larger slice of the American dream pie, to be grownups unlike mother and more like successful men. Her book belabors the inadequacies of women, our difficulties with sexuality, body image, and self concepts. For her, women lose because we fear competing. Competition is a good thing. Her work supports the contemporary sociology that finds a "fear of success" in American women. In Rich's radical feminist formulation, our patriarchal society is evil, the competitive male personality is noxious, and women under patriarchy are mutilated victims. For her, lesbian sexuality and female bonding provide the alternatives, and "the repossession by women of our bodies will bring far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers." At points such radical feminism perversely coincides with the conservative backlash to exalt a mystical sisterhood of female flesh. Chodorow explains why such fantasies of specifically female nurturance are basic in our mother-raised psyches. Ending the "female monopoly" of childcare will not be easy. Women will fight the expropriation of our most gratifying function and our only sphere of power, and men, who are more frightened of intimacy and less capable of it, will continue to avoid childcare for more public forms of enterprise.

Chodorow is the most explicit of the authors in locating herself politically. She notes that class, race, and ethnicity may vary the specifics of gender socialization, and she admits that she simplifies her theory by assuming everyone is heterosexual. We wonder from her analysis how homosexuality can occur, and we want to know how children turn out if they are raised by lesbians or by straight or gay men. Though the mothering activities of women are universal, Chodorow sees many of the evils of our gender system as especially adapted to serve capitalism. "Contemporary family structure produces" malleable character traits that "lend themselves to the manipulations of modern capitalism—to media and product consumerism, to the attempt to legitimate a polity that serves people unequally, and finally to work performance." Capitalism, in turn, reinforces patriarchy, since "men continue to enforce the sexual division of spheres as a defense against powerlessness in the labor market."

Despite her political and historical grounding, Chodorow's self-reproducing cycle of motherhood sounds as immutable as her own dense and careful prose. In contrast, Friday's book shares the ephemeral tone of women's magazines. Yet all these books still confront us with the question of why motherhood has suddenly become so salient.

One answer is that the fabric of female community has been torn along both its warp and its weft, and women are responding to finding themselves unravelled threads. Chodorow states that women "reproduce" men and children physically and emotionally, but no one reproduces us. Motherhood becomes a problem for women who face it alone, without the broad horizontal kin-based or community female support systems of other epochs and other cultures. At the same time, we are experiencing a breach in the smooth vertical replication of daughter by mother. Clearly, Friday represents herself trying to jump off the generational cycle. For her, mothers are sexually repressive, self-condemning housewives, while we daughters want sexual liberation and full economic independence. In this view, our mothers' training becomes an internalized drag on our potential for change, and the anxiety for her own autonomy speaks most clearly in her announcement that she will not bear children for fear of having a daughter.

ity. At the same time, ego psychology and "object relations theory" opened the way for a more flexible application of psychoanalytic theory to women. In addition, several years of feminist sociology have now provided studies of such matters as female competitiveness and the effects of working mothers on their children. Friday synthesizes this material into a statement of personal quest. Chodorow contributes to it and originates a corrective to the Freudian paradigm that will probably stand as the authoritative feminist theory on female personality and gender socialization.

Chodorow claims that her theory supplements those based on the relationship between father and son or mother and son, but the real impetus to the mother-daughter books, I think, is the desire to go beyond romantic, heterosexual love, to create a new literature not based on women's love for men. The poems, stories, and essays about mothers and daughters show a heady feminist enthusiasm springing from a need to prove that women can and should relate to other women, and, in fact, that women always have. The core and undeniable female relationship is that between mother and daughter, and the new theories encourage writers to let old emotions surface.

Meanwhile, popular psychology and the "human potential movement" of the past few years have led to rising expectations for personal intimacy. We are told that relationships should be free, rational, sexy, open, trusting, adult, and free of domination. They aren't, and we feel dissatisfied with others and guilty ourselves for being alienated and noncommunicative, particularly in our closest ties. In the belief that saying it all will solve and heal all, then, we burst to utter the formerly inadmissible. The tangled vines of poetry climb toward reassurance. The mirrors of fiction flash us coded messages. The careful theories, like superstitious children, spell out for us the possibilities of escape. We won't step on the cracks. We won't break mother's back.

— *Judith Kegan Gardiner*

"Some mothers express wonder at their little clones that escape to independent selfhood."

More specific causes, however, have catalyzed the current outpourings about motherhood. The most important is the impetus given women by the women's liberation movement to investigate women's roles, to celebrate women's culture, to understand women's character, and to correct and supplement male science about women. Women have returned to the theories of women analysts like Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, and Helene Deutsch, while researchers like Masters and Johnson conclusively proved Freud wrong about many aspects of female sexual-

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PAPERBACKING

Renewed Encounters

It's Fall 1978, and the hardcover hits of the past twelve months are showing up as paperbacks. Most of them are slush which somehow turned to commercial gold, and are adequately described by the trade papers. But in the spirit of curiosity, here are three little stories about three not-so-run-of-the-mill projects.

* * *

A funnier than usual paperback: Gerald Rosen's THE CARMEN MIRANDA MEMORIAL FLAGPOLE (Presidio Press, last year; soon Avon)

Here comes the first American novel with a Psychiatric Introduction by a seemingly qualified MD. And what does the good doctor tell us? "Don't read this novel! Jerry Rosen is crazy! He believes his work is autobiographical and that all the characters are, quite literally, real!"

Sure enough, there's a person in the book named Jerry Rosen, a Certified Public Accountant blessed with a crazy novelist of a brother named Jack. Plus Dr. Ernest Hemingberg (teacher of creative writing), Luigi the hippie, Grandma Bessie Franklin, and a lot of other zany characters—all of whom, we're told, Jerry Rosen impersonates in real life as aspects of his multifaceted personality.

But one facet is the shrink himself, "Dr. S. Freudenberg," who understandably panics at the end of his Introduction. "Balderdash! I do exist," he tries to claim. "Pinch me, do I not hurt? Cut me, do I not bleed? Don't pay your bill to me, do I not sue?" Before long, his frenzy turns him into a walking, talking joke, like everything else in this nicely readable novel where people can live in their author's mind and in the real world at the same time.

The real fun starts in Chapter One, when Rosen steps forward to crack the jokes which move his book along. We hear one liners about his childhood in the Bronx, his crazy neighbors and colorful family, his twin brother Jack, their trip across the USA to California, and—once there—Jack's attempt to "change the world by changing the way people imagine it."

Jack has tried to do this before, writing a novel about "the Planet Opteema," a better world than ours which the mind can create. But Planet Earth is silly enough already, brother Jerry Rosen insists (he's an accountant, remember, not a novelist like his half-cracked twin). "Don't mess with a writer when it comes to words," Jerry warns us, and *The Carmen Miranda Memorial Flagpole* proves it. A waitress who puts a damper on the brothers' shenanigans is described as "looking as moral and legal as a Lincoln Continental." Another disagreeable lady has an "expression on her face so sour that I figure either she's in great physical pain or else she swallowed a tape deck that's playing country and western music and she can't turn it off." At the Grand Canyon, when some obnoxious tourists threaten to spoil Jack's solitary moment with the sunset, he drives them away with "a series of Martha and the Vandellas impersonations. His 'Heat Wave' alone succeeded in ridding us of half of them."

Jokes are an art form, the only one Jerry and Jack had as kids in the Bronx. And their jokes change the world for them, from something sad to something happy. A good jokester could "change the space we were in by using only words." Any time the Rosen Brothers are hassled, they pull their enemy into a comedy routine, much like that famous brother act of their childhood: Groucho, Chico, and Harpo. But they aren't cop-outs to the world's trouble, either, because "As long as someone keeps joking about it, no one's going to forget."

From East to West, across the plains and mountains to California, the Rosens joke their way to a vision of a better, happier life. But what makes the book so good is that the brothers can finally love America for what it is. Reaching Notre Dame, they joke and glory in the school's football heritage, almost as if they're bit players in an old Pat O'Brien movie. Heading up to Chicago they shout, "HOG BUTCHER TO A NATION! LOOK OUT GENE AMMONS! LOOK OUT NELSON ALGREN! LOOK OUT LOUIS SULLIVAN! LOOK OUT ANDY PAFKO! HERE WE COME!" Settled in California's beautiful Sonoma County, they load a hat with apples, bananas, grapes, and nectarines, then run it up a flagpole in memory of Carmen Miranda, a happy symbol of the innocent, trivial entertainment of their childhood. You can learn the popular history of America reading Rosen's novel, since it's packed with information like the filler columns of a good newspaper, reporting the myths we live by.

The Carmen Miranda Memorial Flagpole is popular literature at its best, written by someone who knows his contemporary technique. Gerald Rosen counts his literary influences as Cervantes, Tolstoi, and Henny Youngman, a mixture lesser writers wouldn't admit or let show through. But Rosen is an honest man who loves himself as the bumptious American he is, made with equal parts of country folklore, big-city savvy, quiet jazz, and ear-splitting rock and roll. S. Freudenberg MD to the contrary, you can't help but smile, sing along, maybe even get up and dance as you read this eminently funny and useful book.

* * *

A more insightful than usual tie-in: Steven Spielberg's CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (a movie, now a Dell paperback)

For much of early 1978 both the movie and the novelization were doing heavy cash business. The celluloid has now faded (not enough Academy Awards), but people are still falling into floor-dumps of the book, which is interesting enough on its own to merit some thought. More folks saw the movie than will read the book, and almost everyone who buys the damn thing will have seen all those special effects first. Maybe they want to prolong the film's experience, or find some confirmation for what they saw (Spielberg wrote the book after finishing the filming). But the movie already had too much linear plot, and one wonders what a novelization could add.

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Notice how the story virtually stops once the giant mother ship arrives—half the shots are of people just standing there and staring. Their sense of wonder is what the movie is all about. The need, the anticipation, the whole sense of irresistible movement toward some goal is resolved when the mother ship looms into view. After that, the movie continues for another forty minutes, simply as a big clump of indulgence—like driving an hour to get a six-scoop ice cream sundae, then taking almost as much time to eat the thing. Little Barry Guiler first describes the spacecraft as "ice cream"; so does Roy Neary. Apparently audiences feel the same way.

Close Encounters in book form is more ice cream—packed tighter and flavored more sharply to compensate for the lack of cinematic effects. But there's more to reading the book than getting another scoop on the sundae. Certain themes are more apparent, and Spielberg is able to make a deeper and more complex statement. Reading his novel makes you want to see the film again, a new wrinkle in the economics of book-and-movie tie-ins.

"Seven misshapen figures emerged from a blinding swirl of desert sand and sage." The first words of the novel are the movie's first scene—and what's being described is a movie scene itself, images coming into focus. Three years into the last quarter of the twentieth century, a century which began with film's invention, people can be trusted to have cinematic imaginations.

Spielberg's novel describes spaceships which fill one's vision like an image fills a screen; the ever-present nighttime sky and the dark landscape are likewise screens to be filled by what comes next. In the chapter where Jillian will lose her son Barry, she hears thunder and runs outside to check the sky. "Clouds had begun gathering in the west, obscuring the weak sun with masses of leaden gray. Behind the clouds Jillian could see lightning at work. A major electrical storm was coming. But the flashes were strangely prolonged, as if frozen. Small distant points of light began skipping from cloud to cloud." It is a broad canvas being composed before her, the elemental form of moving pictures. Her first thoughts are of another movie, "The Wizard of Oz."

But there remain large elements of this novel which are pre-cinematic. This fact is most apparent in the realm of "special effects." At times Spielberg's language tries to create such effects, as when the space creature "flows" instead of walks. But often his descriptions are more suggestive than the effects themselves. "Out of the clouds burst a formation of fifty pinpoints of light," we're told after the first, smaller spacecraft have left the Devil's Tower, "that swiftly materialized into flaming convex planar shapes and dazzling colors. And tricks. These ultra-performance vehicles were performing low-level stunts for their audience."

Reading about these actions, rather than just seeing them, brings up considerations of motive and design; less random, the spectacle is that much less exciting. And somehow the words don't quite make it. "Convex planar shapes" sounds like aerodynamic engineering, while "ultra-performance vehicles" smacks of the Jeep commercials on TV. Roy Neary and his wife were better off when they sorted through their grocery shelves to find a better image—Ice cream cone? Taco shell? Betty Crocker crescent roll?

Thankfully, Spielberg's novel capitalizes on the essentially middle class nature of his story, and this new fascination (only dimly present in the movie) makes up for what we lose in special effects. If the characters are so awestruck by their close encounters of the first, second, and third kinds, if they are so rooted in wonder that they must pursue these visions to the earth's end and then just stand and stare, it is because their own daily lives are so much like the opposite.

"Life-style," a bored Ronnie Neary tells her husband early on. "I think we have to change ours." The encounters are so "enthralling," so "emotional" despite the clear dangers, because life without them is plain dull. As Neary sculpts his model mountain, the TV screen projects scene after scene of insipid middle class life, while his picture window shows a similar life outside.

And what do these citizens yearn for instead? "Vehicles without wings or physics, brilliant, flashing, colored lights that blew away one's security, the belief in your own existence and that of the 'real' world." Life itself is so plain that happiness comes only by risking it.

The pity is that the fantasy is constructed almost completely within middle class terms. We've mentioned the ice cream cones, taco shells, and dinner rolls. The space ships are visualized as Detroit dream machines. And, at one point, Neary sees some technicians as looking like "a cooking-foil commercial." The mother ship, the grand finale which is meant to knock us off our feet, looks like nothing more than "an oil refinery at night."

Throughout the novel, Roy Neary talks about his favorite image, one which was finally dropped from the movie. "Everybody has a secret wish," he writes his children as he prepares to leave with the aliens (an early inevitability not so clear in the film version). "I can't explain it. All I can say is that it's stronger than anything else. When you wish upon a star." The song from Walt Disney's *Pinocchio!* Another movie, and—more importantly—another thoroughly middle class version of a better life. Neary hears it in his head as he physically leaves the planet, a possibility the audience could share only in death.

Finally, death is what *Close Encounters* is about: death as a form of astronautics, the one solid hope beyond this dismal world. As he prepares to leave the planet, an official tells Neary he will now be considered legally dead. He agrees happily. The novel ends, like the movie, with the mother ship's departure, described here as "a brilliant, multicolored stairway up to the heavens," another movie set from countless middle class fantasies. The movie's last forty minutes, the book's closing chapters, have stood absolutely still because both have entered a state of death.

"He said the sun came out last night. He says it sang to him," so goes the report of the old Mexican who has the book's first close encounter. What does this sound like, other than the blissful report of death we've received from poets like Emily Dickinson.

By itself, this death-wish theme is the loveliest part of both book and film. But in its novelized form, Spielberg stresses that this heavenly vision is homemade, built of the stuff our imaginations keep telling us to flee. The dimensions of our prison, then, are all the more small, for our fantasies are made out of the very same stuff.

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A possible disappointment: Robert Coover's THE PUBLIC BURNING (Viking Press/Richard Seaver, last year; now Bantam)

Last year at this time the biggest thing since Custer was supposed to be Robert Coover's forthcoming novel about the 1950s, but when it came, it was (like an ice-cream parlor this reviewer saw in Vermont) Custard's Last Stand. Previewers called it the *Ragtime* of 1977, but not that many books were sold, by a long shot, and so some people might think the remaindered copies of Coover's big fat work will cost less than the new paperback. But, then again, *Ragtime* prospered in hardcover and petered out in paperback, and *The Public Burning* is halfway there toward doing just the opposite.

Why? For one, it was not the novel Coover set out to write, but instead turned out to be something quite different: a topical paperback instead of an ersatz *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (which, God help us, the hardcover looked like, properly bunted out in red-white-and-blue stamping appropriate to its own special history of incipient American fascism). It's been a book Coover worked on since 1968 or so, put through several rewrites at his own insistence and then at the behest of lawyers for RCA, parent company of Random House (who'd contracted the book but dropped it for fear of lawsuits by You Know Who).

Enough of *The Public Burning* got previewed in print over the years that one can tell how it changed form. It was first to be a four-part book: part Rosenbergs, part Nixon, part Coover, and part "The Cat in the Hat for President" (this last section survives in the *New American Review #4*, August 1968). Then parts Three and Four were dropped, in favor of a looney mix of history and fantasy called "The Public Burning of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, A Historical Romance" (see *TriQuarterly* #26, Winter 1973, for what it looked like at this point). The semi-final stage came in 1976, when Coover came back to the USA from England to speak at 30 colleges in 45 days ($$$) and spend some time with editor Ted Solotaroff cutting the book down to publishable and legally-defensible length. The gambit failed: Coover burned himself out (in one Midwestern college town his sister, brother-in-law, and nephews/nieces were in residence as born-again Christians, and gave public reviews of their kinsman's devilish work-in-progress every Sunday for anyone who cared to come to church and pray for his redemption) and the RCA brass proved implacable; the book went to ex-Grove Press insurrectionist Dick Seaver, who has his own line at Viking. As such, the book was published in 1977, to mixed reviews and less-than-anticipated sales.

But it may do better in paperback, for the reason it failed in hardcover. *The Public Burning* lost most of its wild, innovative charm in the crazy journey from 1968 to 1977 (haven't we all?), but even a year's hindsight (and $10 less on the cover price) can help. Given so much as it is to the imaginative personality of Richard Nixon, Coover's novel can only benefit from having a public now able to read The Man's memoirs, watch him feel his way back into public life, and learn how the Great Antidote is not much better than anything we've had since FDR (all this has transpired since that August 1977 pub date).

The Monday-morning quarterbacking that is a built-in benefit of paperbacking tells us this: Coover has studied Nixon as St. Paul studied Christ, and can portray him just as sympathetically or just as unfavorably as he wishes. The great virtue of *The Public Burning* is that it gives us a Nixon who is imaginatively understandable: the hopes and fears of all these years put together in a way which makes us understand ourselves as much as that poor, possibly demented figure out in San Clemente. If recriminations are in order, Coover tells us, we have no one to accuse but ourselves. —*Jerome Klinkowitz*

Readers Recommend

Dear Editors:

I don't know if your reader interview (book review) idea will work or not, but I wanted to send you one anyway. I don't like poetry, and only bought this book because I have a fascination with North Beach . . . the old "beat" home of the 50's.

NORTH BEACH POEMS
by A.D. Winans
Second Coming Press, $2.50
(P.O. Box 31249 San Francisco, Ca 94131)

****

This is a magnificently self-indulgent book by a local poet who has lived in the city all his life. It's a poet writing about his bailiwick with pictures of North Beach and the poet (Winans) by another native son, Richard Morris. This book is almost history: Ferlinghetti and Vesuvio's bar, Grant Avenue and Harold Norse, Caffee Trieste and Bob Kaufman, City Lights Publishing. It's almost literally taking a trip through the personalities of the poets of that era, and as poetry the words click just right. The poet is home and he knows it. He's writing about the lines in his hand which are also the lines on the sidewalks and the shadows on the walls:

old man half blind from looking into
the sun too long shuffling along
the wind stroking your hair.

I felt like I was taking a walk down the street with the poet and his visions myself. It's a book that will make you ask "what the hell more do I want from a book of poems than an evening of conjuring?" A delight to read.

V.C. Lee
San Francisco, CA

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LETTERS

To the Editor,

As a person interested in the farm community of Stearns County I felt dismay after reading the article by Leo J. Hertzel, "Anybody Want a Copy of My Prayer?" (Spring 1978). I am left with the impression of a group of well-fed religious fanatics standing in the way of modern progress. I do not understand the connotative image of the power line protest Mr. Hertzel is attempting to evoke. It is decidedly negative as an accurate description of events in Stearns and Pope counties, Minnesota.

In the first place the article appears to deal with trivia as much as with solid issues. Such striking passages as "good natured, confident, self-satisfied," "an impressive woman," "pointed semi-satanic beard" (whatever that is). "They are heavy, well-fed, prosperous looking people in their thirties and forties," or "A tiny three room frame house. . ." are statements that may impress people of literary interest but hardly convey much in the way of understanding the human issues involved in the power line controversy. "Well-fed" farmers objecting to a power line designed to carry energy for all the rest of us is just plain selfishness, is the message that is evoked in me.

The author leaves the impression that the protest started late in 1977. He says this on pages 19 and 22. "Farmers in Stearns and Pope counties faced the inevitable siting and construction crews bringing in this line from the west in 1977. *Having never really believed the day would arrive* (italics mine), they now began to do more than petition."

The statements from page 19, like the one quoted above, are incomplete in regard to efforts and timing of the power line protest. Some things have happened of which the article writer was not aware. The following headlines in the St. Cloud (Minn.) *Daily Times* are offered in evidence that the protest did begin much earlier than late 1977.

AREA POWER LINE FOES FILE PLEA AGAINST NEED GRANT
(May 4, 1976)

MPCA ASKED TO WATCH POWER LINE
(May 8, 1976)

POWER LINE DELAY CALLED UNLIKELY
(May 21, 1976)

SHERIFF MEETS WITH POWER LINE FOES
(June 14, 1976)

SURVEYORS LET STEARNS COOL OFF AWHILE
(June 15, 1976)

SURVEYORS TO HAVE PROTECTION ON 'LINE'
(June 21, 1976)

SPARKS FLY ALONG POWER LINE SITE
(June 24, 1976)

POWER LINE SURVEY STILL STALLED
(June 25, 1976)

Farmers in Stearns and Pope counties were active in opposing the line before November 1977 at least by eighteen or twenty months. At no time to my knowledge have very many farmers "never really believed the day would arrive." My information from farmers both verbal and behavioral indicates just the opposite. They have taken the threat to their way of life seriously.

There is another statement on page 18 deserving comment. I have not checked the state agricultural department, but I do wonder from what year Hertzel found his information. I cannot imagine that in 1977 Stearns County had "nearly four thousand farms averaging just under two hundred acres each." The 1974 Census of Agriculture, Stearns County, Minnesota, Part IV, page 433, Table 1, shows three thousand, three hundred eighty-three farms in Stearns County averaging two hundred five acres each. Even data from the 1969 Census of Agriculture is below what could be described as nearly four thousand.

I believe that people who are trying to clarify their position and rights in confrontation with government agencies and corporations deserve more respectful and careful treatment. There has been little sympathetic and understanding response to the small farm operators who oppose some questionable decisions and practices of government agencies and corporations. I do not believe they deserve to be treated to questionable scholarship, patronizing disdain or trivia. The questions the farmers are attempting to confront are vital to them, their families, the community and place in society—and, it seems to me, vital to everyone.

One thing that indicates contempt for the farm people on the part of their critics is when we give a great deal of credence to the statements of electrical engineers, construction engineers, technical planners and writers who may well be experts and fail to recognize that farmers, at least in Stearns and Pope counties, are experts in their own field of endeavor. No one knows better than these farmers that highways, pipelines, and power lines will affect their farming operations. The way in which their professional farming expertise has been ignored implies an attitude of contempt. They deserve more careful investigation than Mr. Hertzel has given them.

William L. Cofell
St. Joseph, Minn.

The NAR welcomes letters from readers. We prefer brevity, and ask the right to edit for reasons of style and space limitations – never for reasons of content.

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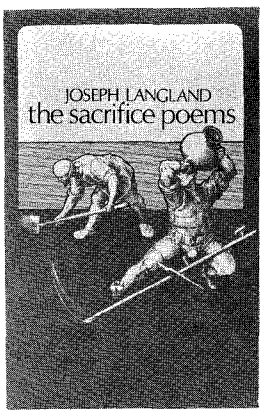
The Melissa & McGonnegal Poster: $3.00

Bill Berry's stunning drawings—15 in all—of the lovely and mysterious young woman who teaches an Alaskan moose to dance the ballet (as featured in the Winter 1975 NAR, already out of print). The poster is printed in two colors on high-quality stock, 23 x 35 inches, sent post-paid in a sturdy mailing tube. Text included. An ideal, light-hearted gift.

Learning to Speak, by Richard Rackstraw: $3.95

A posthumous collection. The book's premise—that we must learn the disturbing complexities of the world before we can presume to express ourselves—may have kept the poet from a timelier sharing of his talents. Sent postpaid. Cover by James Buckels. 48p.



The Sacrifice Poems, by Joseph Langland: $3.95

The brilliant cycle of poems dealing with a boy's encounters with death on an Iowa farm. The book includes an autobiographical introduction by the author. The 64-page paperback is sent post-paid and carefully packaged. Designed by Roy Behrens.

Back Issues of the NAR: $1.50

Summer 1969—Campus unrest issue. Fiction by Paul Theroux; poems by Marvin Bell, Greg Kuzma, Donald Justice.

Fall 1969—John Cage on Abundance (part one). Fiction by Andre Dubus, Gail Godwin. Poetry by Rosellen Brown, *et al.*

Winter 1969—John Cage (part two). Photos by Erling Larsen. Fiction by Jack Hodgins, Edwin Nierenberg.

Spring 1970—Jean Wylder on Flannery O'Connor. New fiction by O'Connor, Dubus. Poetry by Guillevic/Justice.

Summer 1970—Woman's fiction issue. Mary Clearman, Gail Godwin, Cynthia Buchanan, Marilyn Thompson, *et al.*

Fall 1970—Peter Hoffmann on the plot to kill Hitler. Fiction by George V. Higgins. Poems by Dabney Stuart, Bess Brigham.

Winter 1970—Nora Magid on women's magazines. John Means on political kidnapping in Latin America.

Spring 1971—Robert Wachal on Humanities and computers. Fiction by Whitman, Roecker, Shaw. Poems by Levertov, Stokes.

Summer 1971—Nixon in Iowa. Gail Godwin on Joyce Carol Oates. Poems by Philip Levine, Stephen Dobyns, *et al.*

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Summer 1972—Joseph Meeker's *Comedy of Survival*. Fiction by Evgenii Zamiatin, J. C. Oates, Paul Theroux.

Fall 1972—Ribicoff on American medical horrors. Lawrence S. Hall on oil companies and the Maine coast.

Spring 1973—Kosinski interview. William O. Douglas on Nature's Rights. Fiction feature: fathers and children.

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